University of Alberta

"Inkaba Yakho Iphi?" (Where Is Your Navel?): Birthplaces, Ancestors and Ancestral Spirits in South African Literature

by

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For my father
John Hector Conyers Midgley
(1912–2004)

Abstract

This thesis analyses the role that ancestors and ancestral spirits have played in the formation of a more inclusive sense of belonging in South Africa by exploring literature in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. Throughout the thesis, I attempt to show how the *iminyanya* intrude on and shape the lives of individuals. The consideration of specifically African ontologies and mythologies marks a significant shift in the structuring of a sense of belonging in South Africa.

The Introduction explains central concepts and geographic boundaries: *izivivane* (wayside cairns) as points of spiritual and intellectual confluence; *iminyanya*, the living-dead that dwell among us; and the Eastern Cape, the primary geographic territory that is traversed in search of *izivivane* and *iminyanya* that can help to establish a coherent sense of belonging. I also explore the possibility of using new concepts such *ukuhlangana* (bringing together) and *tussenskap* (in-betweenness).

Chapters 3 and 4 consider nineteenth-century attempts to construct a sense of belonging in the liminal space between Europe and Africa by relying on the imaginative interplay between the languages and cultural traditions of South Africa. Works considered include Ntsikana's "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," Thomas Bain's "Kaatje Kekkelbek," the poetry and prose of Thomas Pringle, Olive

Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, S.J. du Toit's *Die koningin fan Skeba* and H.M. Ndawo's *Uhambo lukaGqobhoka*.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the complex interaction among key literary figures of the 1930s: Roy Campbell, William Plomer, Laurens van der Post, N.P. van Wyk Louw, Herbert Dhlomo and B.W. Vilakazi. The discussion is exemplary of what Duncan Brown terms a "shared problematic."

Chapters 6 and 7 consider the ways in which twentieth-century writers have responded to ancestors (Nongqawuse, Coenraad de Buys and Gquma) and to traditional belief systems. Texts considered include: John Buchan's *Prester John*, Joubert Reitz's *Die dolos gooier*, Arthur Nuttall Fula's *Jôhannie giet die beeld*, A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* and S.E.K. Mqhayi's *Ityala lamawele*, Herbert Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, Mary Waters's *u-Nongqause*, B.W. Vilakazi's, "Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa," J.J.R. Jolobe's "Ingqawule," Sarah Gertrude Millin's *King of the Bastards* and J. Bruwer's *Nongqause en die bloedrooi son*.

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Chapter 1

Preface

> This whole theology of shades is important to me. That sense of continuity of belonging, of bringing your immortalities with you. .... Somewhere, I feel, specially [sic] in writing [*Shades*], that sense of communication with the shades. So many people think its [sic] ancestor worship, but it isn't at all. It's community with those that went before and who are keepers of your conscience. You are biologically connected with them as well as by soul and mind. If you disappoint them, they would have some stake in feeling sad. That is why Crispin had to bring the shades home from the mines, otherwise one is a vagabond for ever.
>
> (Marguerite Poland, in an interview with Gorry Bowes-Taylor, "Shades of an author's mind" 20).

In contemplating an enormous study of this nature, I was confronted with one over-arching problem: how was I going to make this material manageable? The sheer volume of work available—primary work spanning several genres and secondary material written not only in these three languages, but also in others—made it impossible to include everything in the scope of a single dissertation.

The decision to limit the scope of my research to a thematic approach centred on the role of the *iminyanya*, the living-dead ancestral shades, grew out of the experience in 1993 of reading Marguerite Poland's novel, *Shades*, as well as several reviews of the book and interviews with the author. The book had resonated deeply with me for reasons that I could not fathom at the time. However, the more I read, and the more I spoke with people about *Shades*, the more I realized that it was the concept of the *iminyanya* that had caused the resonance: for the first time in my experience people were describing themselves and their sense of interaction with the country in terms that confirmed my own sense of belonging. Poland herself has often talked about the influence of African legends, cosmology and belief systems on her perception of the world. Her perceptions, she notes, have adapted as a consequence of growing up in the multilingual, many-cultured environment of the Eastern Cape, studying isiXhosa at university, conducting research into Bushman legends, and studying cattle naming practices among the Nguni.[1] Although, in general, reviewers had praised *Shades*, many of them remained, at best, ambivalent about Poland's remarks regarding the influence of the shades on her work and her insistent suggestion that the act of writing the novel was itself the result of several visitations from the shades, who sometimes appeared in the form of her biological ancestors. As Poland herself explains:

> In a way, I got a lot of help from my shades. The [writing of the] book wasn't going very well, then I had this extraordinary dream where I was trying to put coals on a brazier with my bare hands. It was an agonizing experience and I was weeping and my great grandfather was standing by me and he looked at me with love. He didn't help, but he stood there. And when I woke up I knew I had to finish the book. … [A]ll the way through writing this book the most extraordinary things happened. For instance…I had [a] great uncle who, when I was a little girl, wrote me letters about St Matthews [mission]…. I put them away and half way through this book I rediscovered them…. ("Shades of the Author's Mind" 20)

Other "extraordinary things" that led to the writing of the book, or helped her through the writing process, involved incidents where the shades manifested themselves in her life in a variety of ways, influencing her decision to continue writing. These interventions included accidentally discovering her great-grandmother's diary ("The Footprints of Our History" 14). One day, while visiting the St. Matthews mission on a research trip, she was invited to attend the service in the church. It had been a frustrating time and Poland was ready to abandon the entire project. Yet, for some inexplicable reason, she decided to attend the service. "But when the priest spoke from the pulpit," Poland remarks in her interview with Julia Smith,

---

[1] These comments are made in many interviews that have been assembled in the Press Clippings Collection at the National English Literary Museum under the author's name. Poland's world view is reflected throughout her oeuvre. For an example of how this has occurred in her novel, *Shadow of the Wild Hare* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1986), see my review essay, "Donnarae MacCann and Yulisa Maddy. *Apartheid and Racism in South African Children's Literature, 1985–1995*," H-SAfrica@h-net.msu.edu, 11 Sept. 2002.

> I realised what an auspicious occasion I had stumbled upon. He'd invited an old man [a doctor who had returned from exile after many years] to address the congregation. And as he rose to speak he was greeted with enormous jubilation expressed in a burst of spontaneous song. He spoke movingly of having been away for so long. He spoke of his grandfathers before him. Among them, with them, had been mine. It seemed until that moment there had been two histories shadowing each other, back to back, when all the time they should have been acknowledged as one. This man had come home. And that home was the same place that my family had always considered to be theirs. ("Author, Exile's Mission of Love" 2)

Afterwards, Poland and the doctor spoke. "This is our history and our place," he told her. "It must be built again."

One interviewer, Yvonne Fontyn, acknowledged Poland's emphasis on ancestral shades, but struggled to situate these shades within Poland's own cultural experience ("A Quest for Ancestral Shades" 9). The title of the book, Fontyn noted, "refers to the 'shades' so revered in the Xhosa culture, and the author's own shades—her ancestors." What struck me was the way in which Fontyn had enclosed references to the Xhosa shades, the *iminyanya*, in parentheses, clearly indicating a reference to an unfamiliar concept. Yet at the first mention of "the author's own shades," similar parentheses were absent and the use of the word was qualified by adding that they were (in what could be thought of as more "appropriate" cultural terms) "her ancestors." Fontyn, it seemed, was willing to admit to the influence of western forebears on Poland's life, but was sceptical of accepting Poland's own conceptualisation of her ancestors as *iminyanya*.

In this interview with Fontyn, and indeed in several others at the time, Poland repeatedly mentioned that a series of incidents, or visitations, had led her to write and complete the book. Even so, Fontyn very specifically noted that the shades are "revered in Xhosa culture," but resisted the idea that Poland, as a white South African, could harbour similar feelings of reverence for her shades, or that African concepts such as the *iminyanya* had in fact become an integral part of Poland's world view. Instead, Fontyn interpreted the formative incidents Poland mentions as "a series of strange coincidences" (9). In subsequent interviews, Poland insisted on calling these "strange coincidences" *interventions* by the ancestors.

Another reviewer, Patrick Compton, recognized that the shades formed a very important part of Poland's work, and suggested that the novel was about a "clash of the shades" ("Clash of Ancestral Shades" 14). Unlike Fontyn, he seemed willing to acknowledge the role of the shades in Poland's life, but in a stereotypical reading of African literatures, saw what was happening as a clash between two disparate cultures; a battle for supremacy between the two sets of ancestors.

In his essay, "Towards a Perception of the Shades," Chris Mann opens up the possibility of exploring a different perspective. He explains that we are comprised of several linguistic and cultural shades. Whenever we engage with another culture or language, we also engage with another group of shades. Like two strangers meeting for the first time, these shades need to be introduced and become familiar with each other before they can co-exist peacefully (29–34). What Compton could not, or did not, entertain with regard to Poland's *Shades* was the possibility that the novel was not about a clash between the different shades, but about finding a way to introduce these shades to one another and letting them get to know each other.

At the time the novel was published, I was working at the National English Literary Museum and my own research was focused on the Lovedale Mission Press, the work of Herbert Dhlomo, and scattered *izibongo* (oral poetry) I had come across. Yet, as I read the responses to Poland's work and discussed the *iminyanya* with her and with other people, I realized that I shared with Poland a sense of comprising more than just my own genealogical ancestors. Who I was had been shaped by the different cultures in which I had grown up or with which I had come into contact, and the *iminyanya* were part of my being, too. I realized then that any work I did subsequently would have to reflect the composite nature of my own experience.

I also realized at the time that both Fontyn's and Compton's responses to *Shades* pointed to a fundamental problem with the way we approach South African literature: "We still read apart," as Antjie Krog put it in the title of her brief newspaper opinion piece about the varied and intense responses to J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* ("Ons lees nog apart" 12). *Disgrace*, she noted, had separated its readers starkly into the categories of white and black. Krog's plea in the article is for South Africans to stop regarding certain responses to *Disgrace* as less legitimate than others—in other words, to stop letting our readings and responses drive us apart.

"Reading apart" is about more than reading from "black" or "white" perspectives: it also concerns the historical tendency to compartmentalize our literatures. For example, in the section on Southern African literatures in *European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1986), the writers of the introductory essay comment that

> [i]t was therefore necessary to compound the omission of vernacular writing with a further taxonomic partition [into Afrikaans and English] which many South Africans will find objectionable but which is rooted in the law of the land and certainly does make sense in a comparative approach. (216)

Ironically, on the previous page they quote Ezekiel Mphahlele's remark that "I personally cannot think of the future of my people in South Africa as something in which the white man does not feature: whether he likes it or not our destinies are inseparable" (*The African Image* 66). Yet these inseparable destinies are constantly separated in our critical approaches. While the authors acknowledge the diversity of South African society, its literature remains, they claim, trapped in "the law of the land" that demands a segregated approach.

South African literary historians in the past have also been trapped in a similar conceptual mould: John Kannemeyer's exhaustive *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur* focuses only on Afrikaans literature; Malvern van Wyk Smith's *Grounds of Contest* only on literature written in English; and D.B. Ntuli and C.F. Swanepoel's *Southern African Literature in African Languages: A Concise Historical Perspective* focuses only on vernacular writings (neatly compartmentalized into separate languages).

There is little or no attempt to read these literatures together and to consider the connections, if any, that exist between them. If we are to stop reading apart, we have to develop strategies that will allow us to stop seeing our literatures as compartmentalized in this way and instead begin to see them as being inextricably woven together into a larger whole. As Rustum Kozain remarks, "a focus on racial separation under apartheid, in critical and cultural commentary, leads to a caricature of South African lives and denies intimacies and influences across its racial lines" ("Review of Mark Sanders, *Complicities*"). I would extend Kozain's parameters to include not only racial separation but also intellectual and cultural separation; thus I offer an integrative reading of these three literatures that shows their mutual interactions, influences, and responses to each other and to the socio-political environment from which they emerged.

The conceptual ideal of reading the literatures in all South Africa's languages as one, of not "reading apart," is not new, but finding a way of achieving the ideal remains problematic. In an attempt to bring us towards reading our literatures as one, in 1979 Stephen Gray compared the way southern African literatures interact to an archipelago—island peaks joined together under the surface (*Southern African Literature* 14). At a glance, he suggested, these connections are not obvious, yet more detailed investigation will uncover the shared past that binds these literatures together. This is a useful, but nonetheless flawed, conceptualization of our literature, for within this analogy, what remains visible, despite the geographic proximity of the islands, is their separateness. At the end of the day, we still *read* apart.

More recently, Michael Chapman has made a renewed effort to read southern African literature as an integrated whole in *Southern African Literatures* (1995). It is an important study that goes a long way towards establishing a tradition of no longer reading apart. In his "Author's Preface," Chapman notes it is difficult to begin to imagine and define "national" literatures in multilingual countries when "a fundamental requirement of converting groups into nations is lacking in all the countries in southern Africa: namely widespread, multiclass literacy in a common language" (xv). This raises for him several important concerns, including "whether writers and critics in the Africa of the 1990s have not to find new ways and new terms in which to describe the multifaceted nature of post-colonial experience and writing" (Flora Veit-Wilt qtd in *Southern African Literatures* xvi). What emerges for Chapman, as it does for me, is the "historical need to give literatures from predominantly African countries their own priorities" while avoiding "the general practice in most existing literary surveys and histories of balkanising the literature into discreet ethnic units."

What Chapman recognizes very clearly is that "the Xhosa bard and the settler journalist, though divided by language, literacy, race and probably sentiment, were both part of the same story" (xvii). A central concern is how to present all these diverging factors and interpretations as part of a single story, and that challenge is, in part, what I take up in my dissertation. Like Chapman, I too believe that "there should be an awareness of predominant themes and generic preponderance in response to the idea of nations" (xvi). In relying on the *iminyanya* as a central thematic concern, I am able to offer different connections and interpretations that allow us to read inclusively and to see different moments of confluence and commonality where in the past we have been able only to see separation and division.

This dissertation analyses the role and function of ancestors and ancestral spirits in the formation of a more inclusive sense of belonging in South Africa. The Introduction explains central concepts and geographic boundaries that emerge throughout the subsequent chapters: *izivivane*, or wayside cairns, as points of spiritual and intellectual confluence; *iminyanya*, the living-dead that dwell among us; and the Eastern Cape, the primary geographic territory that is traversed in search of *izivivane* and *iminyanya* that can help to establish a coherent sense of belonging. In the introduction, I also begin to explore the possibility of using new concepts such *ukuhlangana / ukuhlanganisa* (bringing together / one who brings together) and *tussenskap / tussenskapper* (in-betweenness / a person who is in a state of in-betweenness) in relation to South African literature.

In the subsequent chapters, I embark on a roughly chronological discussion of aspects of the literatures in question. Chapter 3 looks at various attempts during the early to mid nineteenth century to construct a sense of belonging in the liminal space between Europe and Africa. I focus on, inter alia, Ntsikana's "Great Hymn," which is the first creative work by an umXhosa that can be attributed to a particular author, Thomas Bain's performance piece, "Kaatje Kekkelbek," and the poetry and prose of Thomas Pringle.

The imaginative interplay between the languages and cultural traditions of South Africa is further illustrated in my discussion in Chapter 4 of literature written in the latter half of the nineteenth century and at the start of the twentieth century—Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, S.J. du Toit's *Die koningin fan Skeba* [The Queen of Sheba] and H.M. Ndawo's *Uhambo lukaGqobhoka* [Gqobhoka's Journey]—the latter two being, respectively, the first Afrikaans and isiXhosa novels. I show in this chapter that among all the writers in question, there gradually developed a clearer sense of identification with Africa and a sense of belonging was no longer predicated on a link with European culture, but on whatever unknown factors Africa might present in the future.

In Chapter 5, I shift away from the discussion of creative writing to engage with critical explorations during the 1930s of the scope and nature of South African literature, much of which laid the foundation for the way in which writers in the remainder of the twentieth century approached their task. I focus on the work produced by Roy Campbell, William Plomer and Laurens van der Post in the first three issues of *Voorslag*, a short-lived but explosive literary magazine, as well as on the work of N.P. van Wyk Louw, Herbert Dhlomo and Benedict Wallet Vilakazi. I show how these writers, directly and indirectly, responded to each other and to their socio-cultural environment, exemplifying what Duncan Brown terms a "shared problematic" ("National Belonging" 758).

Brown's concept of a shared problematic is explored further in the following two chapters of my thesis, in which I look at the ways in which twentieth-century writers have engaged with and responded to their literary ancestors and how they have incorporated or rejected the history and the writings of nineteenth century. Chapter 6 looks at the broader impact that syncretic philosophies centred on the *iminyanya*—especially those that have been promoted in African Initiated Churches—have had on South African creative writing. I discuss the various responses to traditional belief-systems in such works as John Buchan's *Prester John*, Joubert Reitz's *Die dolos gooier*

[The Thrower of Bones], Arthur Nuttall Fula's *Jôhannie giet die beeld* [The Golden Magnet], A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* [The Wrath of the Ancestors] and S.E.K. Mqhayi's *Ityala lamawele* [The Lawsuit of the Twins].

In Chapter 7, I look specifically at literature written about three ancestral figures, Nongqawuse, Coenraad de Buys, and Gquma. In Herbert Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator*, Mary Waters's *u-Nongqause* [Nongqause], B.W. Vilakazi's, "Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa" [The Xhosa Calamity] J.J.R. Jolobe's "Ingqawule," Sarah Gertrude Millin's *King of the Bastards* and J. Bruwer's *Nongqause en die bloedrooi son* [Nongqause and the Blood Red Sun], these three figures have been seen either as heroes of African nationalist struggles or as villains and symbolic figures who could be used to justify apartheid (or segregationist) ideology.

The writers in my study all make use of African mythologies and ontologies in their work and I attempt to show how, in doing so, the *iminyanya* intrude on and shape the lives of individuals. The use of specifically African ontology and mythology in Afrikaans and English writing marks a significant shift in the structuring of a sense of belonging in South Africa, and ties these works more closely to the world view presented in the works written in isiXhosa. My approach in each chapter is to survey the material at hand, focusing on the texts' common interest in exploring how narratives and world views converge around the concept of the *iminyanya*. In the process, I begin to explore the possibility of using local terminology to describe the emergent formation and manifestation of a sense of belonging in South Africa that is distinguishable in these texts. In the conclusion to the dissertation, I revisit the potential, within the broader context of my research, of these terms in discussing the construction of a contemporary sense of belonging. Every work and every term I have included can therefore be seen as a "stone" that helps comprise our literary *izivivane* and in this way has contributed to constructing a locally-defined sense of belonging.

Chapter 2

Introduction

> As Africans we do not have to look at ourselves [with the de-spiritualised, cynical ethos of the decaying European empires], judge ourselves according to those jaded opinions, as is our common tendency. Forget the Euromerican modes and models. We do not exist in relation to them only. We may express ourselves in our own voices, with all the fervour, trauma, richness and vitality of the developing nation we are.
>
> (Brett Bailey, *The Plays of Miracle and Wonder* 10)

At points where the myriad of footpaths in kwaXhosa intersect,[1] one sometimes finds an unassuming pile of stones—this is one of many *izivivane*,[2] wayside cairns, that are scattered across the landscape. When travellers along these footpaths encounter *izivivane*, some add a stone and mutter a supplication. "*Thixo ndincede*" (God help me), or "*Siph' amandla*" (Give me strength), they say as they place a stone on the cairn. Then they continue with their respective journeys. The supplication is a request for help with the completion of the enterprise they have embarked upon, for a blessing to be bestowed on both the decision that initiated the journey and the eventual outcome or effect of that decision.

---

[1] Literally: "The place of the Xhosa." Following Peires (*The House of Phalo* 1), I use the Xhosa terms "emaXhoseni" (At place where the Xhosa are) or "kwaXhosa," except where, for historical reasons, I could not. In precolonial times, the borders of this region were very loosely defined. In colonial times, the area east of the Fish River was loosely called "Xhosaland." The general area has had several names, each denoting particular historical and political circumstances: Queen Adelaide's Land, British Kaffraria (or simply Kaffraria), Border Region, Eastern Cape, Eastern Frontier, Transkei, Ciskei…the list is almost endless. Most of these terms are no longer acceptable, and moreover, they are inaccurate. A general reference to what is currently called the Eastern Province will also not suffice, since the geographic boundaries of this area have shifted often throughout history.

[2] Singular: *isivivane*.

Some people attach no particular significance to these *izivivane* and consider them mere "charms" that are "devoid of deeper religious or social significance" (Peires, *The House of Phalo* 65). However, others see the *izivivane* as informal places of worship beyond the cattle kraal, where the ancestors are generally said to reside (Mtuze, *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality* 51). Travellers can unburden their souls at *izivivane* by telling their secrets to the *iminyanya* (their shades, their ancestors).[3] For an instant while the ritual of placing a stone on the cairn is performed, the travellers are suspended: their point of origin becomes one with their destination; in the present, the past merges with the future; the physical journey attains a metaphysical dimension through the supplication that is uttered. In this moment, itinerant souls become grounded. The travellers move on, but the *izivivane* remain as part of the landscape: testimonies to those individual moments of participation in a ritual that, if only for one moment, binds the travellers, with their diverse pasts and futures, together.

For one day, on 10 May 1994, people from all over South Africa set aside the differences of the past to celebrate the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first democratically-elected President. It was a milestone that marked the end of one long journey and the start of another. At the end of that particular day, South Africans slowly returned to their daily routines, but the memories remained, stacked together to form symbolic *izivivane* that testify to a moment in which we had come together for a blessing as we set off on a new journey. Yet, as the initial euphoria surrounding the end of formal apartheid wore off, South Africans faced very real concerns regarding difference and unity within a community that had, until very recently, been predicated not only on socially constructed divisions, but also on legislated divisions between people. In South Africa, scholars have attempted in various ways to (re)construct a sense of individual and national identity that is more equitable and that can transcend and heal the divided legacies of apartheid and colonialism.[4] Recent metropolitan critical theory,[5] on the other hand, has tended to "explode the myths and fictions of nationalist thought" (Brown, "National Belonging and Cultural Difference" 757), highlighting the conflicted, fractured and ambivalent modes of identification that mark the individual subject's existence in a modern, contemporary world and exposing the lack of coherence in what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities" (*Imagined Communities*). Despite the fact that South African scholars are aware of such ambivalence, the drive towards some semblance of national belonging has been a central thematic concern in much of the work they have produced since the unbanning of the African National Congress in 1990.[6]

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[3] I deliberately do not use the word "spirits" in this context, for, as Peter Mtuze reminds us, "Africans do not regard the ancestors as 'spirits'," *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality* (Florida, South Africa: Vivlia, 2003) 5.

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[4] See inter alia Sabine Marschall, "The Poetics of Politics: Imagi[ni]ng the New South African Nation," *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Comparative Studies* 5 (2001). http://www.safundi.com/papers.asp?lop=marschall.

[5] I tend to use the term metropolitan not only in a more traditional sense to depict urban-rural relations, but also to denote the relationship between the perceived cultural "ruralness" of the colonies set against the more "urban" culture of the European metropole.

[6] One could argue that Albie Sachs initiated an artistic response to the past in his "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" paper (1990), although this would not take into consideration the prior work done by, inter alia, Kelwyn Sole ("Democratising Culture and Literature in a 'New South Africa': Organisation and Theory"); Tony Morphet ("Cultural Settlement: Albie Sachs, Njabulo Ndebele and the Question of Social and Cultural Imagination"); and Njabulo Ndebele ("Actors and Interpreters: Popular Culture and Progressive Formalism"). Nor does it consider the foundational work done by Sol T. Plaatje, B.W. Vilakazi, Herbert Dhlomo, and N.P. van Wyk Louw in the earlier part of the twentieth century. In his study of intellectual responses to apartheid, Mark Sanders argues that both Sachs and Ndebele present arguments that in some ways resemble N.P.

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There are moments when the apparent opposition between the desire for an overarching sense of belonging and the contradictory nature of individual identity manifests itself as a critical impasse: individual subjectivity denies the nation-state the alleged homogeneity it requires for its success; yet a critical (and political) emphasis on difference has fuelled separatist struggles, resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of exclusive "ethnic" states. Such an emphasis on multiplicity and difference raises the worrying spectre of homelands, and can become disabling in the face of the need to rebuild an already fractured society.[7]

As Anthony Appiah correctly notes, the perception of subjectivity is relative. In the West, identity is concerned primarily with the individual; in Africa identity revolves around the community and individual identity comes to stand in for the greater community which one inhabits (*In my Father's House* 76). The search for identity within the post-apartheid era is therefore focused as much on a group, or national, identity as it is on the construction of individual subjectivity. During the apartheid era, the struggle for political freedom in South Africa often resulted in a situation where the community was foregrounded at the expense of individual subjectivity. As Lesley Bank has shown in her study on the formation of identity in the Eastern Province settlement of Mooiplaas ("Beyond Red and School"), the community is still dominant in the construction of post-apartheid identities, particularly in rural areas and areas that were most affected by the insanity of forced removals. Fortunately, the *iminyanya* also serve a crucial function at a communal level. John Henderson Soga writes that the *iminyanya* are "of all other forces that which preserves the unity of a tribe, and preserves it from disintegration" (*AmaXosa Customs*, 151). Although John Henderson Soga, as the son of Rev. Tiyo Soga, grew up

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van Wyk Louw's notion of "loyale verset"—loyal resistance (*Complicities* 62).

[7] Consider, for example, the call for an independent Afrikaner homeland in, inter alia, C.H.W. Boshoff, "'n Volkstaat vir Afrikaners [An Independent State for Afrikaners]," *S.A. akademie vir wetenskap en kuns* 34.4 (1994): 275–85. For a more global consideration, see Tom Keating and W. Andy Knight, *Building Sustainable Peace* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004).

as a Christian, his grandfather made sure that he received a thorough grounding in ancestral belief systems. He is therefore uniquely placed to comment on amaXhosa tradition, and his work is still regarded as one of the more authoritative sources on pre-Christian African identity. From Soga, we gather that the shades not only shape individual identity, but they also provide coherence on a communal, tribal, or even national level.

The challenge is therefore to find ways in which to balance recognition of difference with the felt need for co-operation and belonging—to unearth, interrogate and ultimately reconstruct through our critical endeavours existing literary and cultural *izivivane* that ground us in the same geographical space but at the same time acknowledge the fact that beyond these points of confluence, our paths may yet again diverge.[8]

In South Africa, the process of reconciliation and rebuilding our society has to a large extent been predicated on remembering and rediscovering acts of violence and abuse during the era of official apartheid.[9] It is only through active critical engagement with these "struggles and contradictions of memory and forgetting" (Carklin, "Dramatic Excavations" 23) concerning our past that we will be able to move beyond the restraints of ideologically imposed difference under apartheid to a communally-felt sense of belonging. Writers and critics in South Africa need to involve themselves in an ongoing, engaged digging into the past that will reveal a mutual responsibility in the (re)construction of our past as well as our present. Revealing and consciously engaging with the atrocities of the past become important steps towards rebuilding our society and establishing new terms of belonging. By re-investigating our history, we can begin to discover the ways in which South African writers have responded to what Duncan Brown sees as "a mutual implication in a history of difference, which acknowledges local as well as global affiliations" ("National Belonging" 758).

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[8] Recall, here, for instance, Poland's accidental meeting at the St. Matthews mission, where the returned exile told her that this place "had to be built again," in Julia Smith, "Author, Exile's Mission of Love," *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 Nov., 1993, *La Femme* 2). Also recall Mongane Serote's remark that the African Renaissance is about finding commonalities in "Ordinary People Are the Creators of African Culture," *From Anti-Apartheid to African Renaissance: Interviews With South African Writers and Critics on Cultural Politics Beyond the Cultural Struggle*, Ulrike Ernst (Hamburg: LIT, 2002), 148–63.

[9] The literature dealing with various aspects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) increases daily. Several studies have drawn comparisons between the South African TRC and other Truth Commissions elsewhere. While interesting, this discussion will not be pursued in depth here.

For Brown, this "mutual implication in a history of difference" paves the way for the construction of a "revindicated nationalism" that is not based on the "fictions of the imagined unity" (757), but on a shared problematic. The thought of being mutually implicated in the construction and reception of the past is appealing, yet I do not wish at this point to pursue the idea into the realm of nationalism, as Brown does—such discussion, as Gugu Hlongwane points out, is perhaps still premature ("What has Modernity to Do with It?" 111). However, I do believe that Brown's "shared problematic" holds much potential as a starting point for such a discussion, and this thesis is occupied, in part, with the task of unravelling moments in our past where we can identify a "shared problematic" that will help us, eventually, to construct a discourse that is based in the local.

The way in which Brown uses the concept of mutual implication in the events of the past resonates with the way in which Mark Sanders has attempted, from a more philosophical vantage point, to salvage the idea of complicity in relation to South Africa's past:

> Until recently, there has been no full-scale philosophical exposition of complicity on which to draw. I attempted to develop, from incidental remarks in the responses of Jacques Derrida and others, a conception of complicity that would make it possible to think of resistance and collaboration as interrelated and to explore the problem of complicity without either simply accusing or excusing the parties involved. My project became—without relinquishing the pejorative force of the word *complicity* or, indeed, the more positive force, for many, of such terms as *loyalty* and *solidarity*—to mount a conceptual generalization of complicity as the very basis for responsibility entering into, maintaining, or breaking off a given affiliation or attachment. Returning to South Africa, I began to see

> that complicity was a problem not exclusively for supporters of the apartheid regime and its policies but also for opponents. (*Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* x)

For Sanders, the root of his approach lies in Emil Zola's response to the Dreyfus affair[10]: Zola's "J'accuse" signifies the moment when, as an intellectual, one engages in the "act of affirming one's complicity in order to assume responsibility for what is done in one's name without simply distancing oneself from the deed" (4). Through his discussion of the Dreyfus affair, Sanders reaches his working definition of complicity: "Complicity, in this convergence of act and responsibility, is thus at one with the basic folded-togetherness of being, of human-being, of self and other. Such foldedness is the condition of possibility of all particular affiliations, loyalties, and commitments" (11). This sense of "foldedness" would appear to exist despite the emphasis on separation fostered during apartheid; in fact, Sanders suggests, it is our recognition of complicity within this folded-together-ness under apartheid that made opposition to apartheid possible.

Complicity, for Sanders, revolves around the node of apartheid: "It was around apartheid that…intellectuals articulated, not simply a position in support of, or in opposition to, a set of policies, but, more or less explicitly, the affirmation or denial of a basic human foldedness" (14–15). Apartheid, then, is what Brown would call the "shared problematic" out of which it becomes possible to develop an intellectual history of apartheid: how writers and intellectuals were driven by, and responded to, apartheid becomes a way for us to interrogate a sense of the ways in which people belonged, and perhaps still do belong, in "South Africa."

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[10] At the heart of "L'Affair" lies the wrongful imprisonment for treason of a Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus. Dreyfus's conviction in 1894 sparked a decade-long battle to prove his innocence and to reveal the deepset anti-Semitism of the French populace. In 1898, Emile Zola wrote a scathing article, "J'accuse," in which he explored the nature and extent of intellectual complicity with the Affair. Zola was convicted of libel. In 1906, the original verdict was annulled and Alfred Dreyfus was reinstated to the Army with promotion and awarded the Legion of Honour.

But an investigation into scenes of complicity is not my primary objective, for there are other such nodes of foldedness, other shared problematics that remain to be explored. Still, an understanding of complicity such as that forwarded by Sanders is useful in bringing together for discussion works that may otherwise appear to have little in common. By looking at the past in terms of such a revised conception of complicity, or by allowing ourselves to suggest mutual implication in a way that does not necessarily imply unity of purpose, Brown and Sanders are able to move critical discussion of South African literature into new territory. However, while the term employed by Sanders brings us closer to an understanding of our mutual involvement with the events of the past, it does not bring us closer to grounding our sense of belonging in local terms or to developing a critical framework that is drawn from the local, as suggested by the concept of an African renaissance. By contrast, Brown's formulation of "mutual implication in a shared problematic" allows us to focus on the local and, by interrogating the "shared problematic" (or complicity) that exists, to let the "interactions and collusions" speak for themselves and provide us with the terminology around which to formulate a local discourse ("National Belonging" 758).

Formulating such a local discourse is important, since basing the discussion of South Africa's past primarily in discourses of Europe and America, as both Brown and Sanders do, can become problematic. For instance, Sandra Chait argues that "the transfer of political power from oppressor to oppressed inevitably brings in its wake the appropriation and reworking of mythical material" ("Mythology, Magic Realism, and White Writing After Apartheid" 17). She adds that the oppressors are finally compelled to confront their culpability and that their authors invariably attempt through mythology to account for what went wrong. Chait goes on to argue that white South African writers such as André Brink (*Die eerste lewe van Adamastor*, 1988; trans.: *Cape of Storms: The First Life of Adamastor*, 1993) and Mike Nicol (*Horseman*, 1995) use magic realism as a strategy through which to expiate their own sense of guilt by transferring the burden of the past onto their respective mythological gods.

In such a reading of the past, remembering steers uncomfortably close to suggesting remembering as a way to expiate white guilt. Chait's argument represents a continued fascination among many metropolitan and metropolitan-oriented critics with the issue of white guilt in the aftermath of apartheid. Yet her argument, pursued to its logical conclusion, would lead to a state of paralysis in which writers—not only white writers, but all South African writers—would eventually be unable to redefine themselves and their relationship to the country. The task of digging into the past has become central to our reconceptualization of ourselves and is, in itself, a form of "re-mythologizing." By reconstructing the past in new ways (for instance by suggesting mutual complicity or involvement), Chait's argument would suggest, we shift the blame onto these new mythological gods, thus expiating ourselves as the present generation. But this is not necessarily true. A new mythology that includes the possibility of mutual complicity or implication, or that arises from an investigation of a shared problematic, such as that which Brink and Nicol create through their use of magic realism, need not be a vehicle for all-consuming (white) guilt, but can become a medium through which writers can affirm a new sense of identity, as is the case in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000).

What is required, ultimately, is to find a critical language and correlative practice through which we can move beyond the impasse created by the apparently conflicting concerns of critical theory and the pragmatic requirements of "unity in our diversity" as laid out in the preamble to the South African constitution.[11] Put bluntly: we have to articulate the "unity in our diversity" called for in the constitution both practically and theoretically in ways that will not only elucidate this intention, but extend it in ways that will not allow for historic amnesia. It is no longer sufficient to look at African literature through the eyes of Europe, carefully tweaking and adjusting Euromerican theories so that we can fit our literature into a foreign mould. We need to reverse this order. If we are eventually to develop a coherent theory of South African literature, we cannot do so by simply tweaking existing metropolitan models enough to allow a ragged-looking colonial mirror image the dignity to face the metropolitan critics and masters.

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[11] An attempt at attaining some semblance of national unity should not necessarily imply a wholesale acceptance of the concept of a "rainbow nation," a concept that, as Kelwyn Sole points out in "South Africa Passes the Posts" (*Alternation* 4.1 (1997): 116–51), has become a favoured project of a liberal, postcolonial academic elite.

Finding suitable grounds on which to construct a new critical framework can be problematic. As Anthony Appiah points out, "whatever Africans share, we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, a common religious or conceptual vocabulary" (*In My Father's House* 26). In South Africa, with its racially and socially divided past, we have to extend ourselves beyond the limits of our own cultures, beyond the safety nets erected by apartheid and an historical emphasis on difference. A new discourse should also extend beyond the boundaries of the academy and actively engage with the lives of individuals. In order to make this vision a reality, we need to find new terms on which we can base what Appiah calls a "usable identity" (*In My Father's House* 180).

A first, yet crucial, step towards finding a "usable identity" in Africa is to accept Africa as a valid basis for conceptualising the self and a sense of belonging, as well as for trying to formulate a critical practice that is our own. At the same time, we should not forget those external influences that have shaped who and what we have become in modern times, for we do not exist in a vacuum: we respond to external stimuli, often more so than to our own healthy set of resources. While we cannot simply ignore western theoretical models, we do need to place them in their proper perspective and focus, first and foremost, on the interactions, the vibrancy, the impassioned dances with and around the different cultural practices that exist in our country.

However, in turning our attention to the local as the foundation for a revised critical discourse, we also need to remain mindful of the fact that in the past, South African culture "has been a culture of inequality, silence and coercion" that is "implicated in the processes of political and ideological contestation of power" (Sole, "Democratising Culture" 2, 3). During the apartheid era, large portions of South African culture were deliberately suppressed, including anything that might have suggested that we, like the missionaries, had "absorbed more from the people [we] lived with than [we] realised" (Marguerite Poland qtd in Pat Schwartz, "Family History Calls up a Writer's Shades" 3). If we wish to truly democratize our culture, we have to become aware of what we have taken from each other and how we have, despite past efforts to the contrary, shared more than the authorities have allowed us to admit. The identities we have fashioned for ourselves in modern South Africa are not part of an abstracted "metaphysical essence" (Brown, "National Belonging" 763), but the product of a lived reality and a mutual implication in the events of the past. It is only by acknowledging and interrogating our joint implication in the differences of the past, by attempting to understand our past and the construction of our sense of belonging in terms of the shared problematic that emerges from an analysis of it, that we can begin to talk about our society—and, specifically, the literature produced by it—in ways that transcend the historically ingrained articulation of difference that characterizes our critical discourse. Within such a framework of shared experience (but divergent responses), we can, as Appiah suggests, begin to "see the world as a network of points of affinity" (*In my Father's House* 7).

Ultimately, my work is about bringing what could be called our "intellectual shades" home, as Crispin does with the shades of the Pumani brothers in Poland's novel, *Shades*. Shortly after Crispin finds work as a translator on the mines, the three Pumani brothers, Crispin's friends from the mission, are bartered into a labour contract on the mines, where they suffer physical and mental abuse. When Crispin discovers the degradation his friends have had to suffer, he vows to return them home safely. However, one of the young men, Sonwabo, is charged with sodomy and imprisoned. Crispin subsequently arranges for his brothers to stow away on a homeward bound train. They are killed when the British troops massacre the occupants of the train and in the end, Crispin returns to the Eastern Cape with only three twigs plucked from a *mphafa* tree, which the Pumani children took with them to guide their spirits home in the event of death (397; 415; 417). At the mission, he hands the twigs to the dead boys' parents, thus symbolically returning their spirits to the place of their birth. As Poland explains, he has to do this so that their spirits do not remain vagabonds forever ("Shades of the Author's Mind" 20).

My work is not in the first place about the way in which our critical endeavours can engage with Euromerican models, nor is it about how our critical vocabulary differs from or gains legitimacy as a result of these models; it is about bringing our literary shades home, about no longer being an intellectual vagabond. The language I use in my dissertation attempts to reflect this and for this reason, I have made a conscious decision, as far as possible, not to engage directly with Euromerican critical theory in the body of this thesis. If current postcolonial criticism fails to come to grips with the peculiarities of the South African situation, or provides a useful point for future exploration, I address these issues in footnotes. My intention is not to deny either the importance of Euromerican discourse or the relevance of engaging in such discussion. I feel, simply, that this is neither the place nor the time to do so. As Albie Sachs argues in his article, "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" (1990), we have to move beyond a mere response to the discourses of Europe and establish new discourses that look outward from Africa. Sachs questions the continued validity of art that is constructed as a *response* to a specific situation, whether this be apartheid or the constitution of our subjectivity on terms that amount to a response to metropolitan inquiry. At present, engagement with Euromerican critical discourse often seems not to be about finding our own language; rather, it appears to be about proving our intellectual worth to Europe, about proving that we can imitate and mimic, rather than being about exploring the possibilities embedded in what President Thabo Mbeki has termed an "African Renaissance."

For Mbeki, this "renaissance" implies, inter alia, finding ways to harness African thought "in the drive for the development of Indigenous Knowledge Systems" ("Address of the President," para. 37). In his address to the Conference of the Association of African Universities in Cape Town on 22 February 2005, Mbeki formulated the challenge for universities and intellectuals "as a call that insists that all critical and transformative educators in Africa embrace an indigenous African world-view" (para. 38) Two conferences have been held to provide content to the definition (in 1998 and in 2000), but as Ulrike Ernst points out in her introduction to *From Anti-Apartheid to African Renaissance*, the concept remains poorly-defined (26).

For Mahmood Mamdani, a participant in the 1998 conference, this renaissance involves a reawakening of thought and necessarily involves challenging the processes of knowledge production and thought systems (130–31), a challenge spearheaded by "an

African-focused intelligentsia" (134). In an interview with Ulrike Ernst in 2000, Mongane Wally Serote provides further insight into the concept of an African Renaissance: "Africans," he says, "must find a manner in which they locate the African continent to be equal to any other continent." But what Serote says immediately afterwards is perhaps even more illuminating for my project:

> ...one of the greatest challenges of African intellectuals is to understand the dynamism of diversity. The dynamism of diversity depends on two things: we cannot negate differences, we must not negate differences or want to do away with differences. At the same time, *you must be skilled enough to identify commonalities*. And then, you must be skilled enough to keep the two informing each other. (158—my emphasis)

For Serote, "the key thinkers are going to be the ordinary people of this country" (159). It is the beadworkers, seamstresses and woodcarvers who, among others, will contribute to the creation of African concepts and who will advance the "indigenous knowledge systems" that Mbeki refers to. The African Renaissance will therefore rely not only on accepted western academic knowledge systems, but also on the knowledge systems that exist beyond the confines of traditional academia. The African Renaissance depends on being able to reach beyond the traditional boundaries of academic thinking and on being able to "identify commonalities" as much as differences.

Michael Chapman, also in an interview with Ulrike Ernst, confirms Serote's suggestion that the African Renaissance needs to position Africa as "equal to any other continent" (85). However, Chapman adds another dimension to the work of African intelligentsia in this rebirth of African thought. For him, being African-focused involves making our own critical and creative voices heard. "A country like this," he notes of South Africa,

> is always vulnerable to the latest import from London, New York, or Paris.... Universities have been notorious in imitating Oxbridge.... But the West has never been our saviour, even though most of us are westernised in different and valuable ways.... I doubt that Europe wants to hear anything we have to say, but perhaps it could learn something. (87)

I share Chapman's scepticism about the willingness of Europe (and America) to listen to what we have to say. In an effort to forge a critical language and correlative practice that emanates from the African continent, I have begun to build my discussion around critical terms that have grown out of intellectual explorations of local possibilities rather than rely primarily on the imported terminology of Euromerican critical discourse. Two concepts, in particular, emerge as central to my discussion: *ukuhlangana* and *tussenskap*—both terms that allow a range of grammatical and semantic inflections that extend the nuances of the discussion.

The first of these terms, *umhlanganisi*, that is, "one who brings together," is drawn from a deeper reading of the verb, *ukuhlangana*, which means to unite, to come together, to join. [12] In its transitive form, *ukuhlanganela*, it means to meet for a purpose; in the causative form, *ukuhlanganisa*, it means to assemble, to cause to bring together.[13] In a secondary sense, *ukuhlangana* means to parry (to join sticks), to ward off or to defend against something. The root of the word, used as a noun, refers to armour (*isihlanangiselo*) or to an instrument for warding off danger (*isihlanganiso*).[14] The noun-form of the causative is *umhlanganisi*, the one who brings together. I use this word to describe, where appropriate, a person who embodies all of the qualities of *ukuhlangana*.[15] I argue that when read within the context of the *iminyanya* and a world

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[12] I am indebted to both Professor Peter Mtuze and to Sikhumbuzo Maqubela for their help regarding my explorations around the possibility embedded in this term.

[13] This is the sense that S.E.K. Mqhayi uses the word in his poem on the Battle of Amalinde where he says "Kwakhal' upondo lwenkom' ukusihlanganisa" (The horn of an ox sounded to call us together—*Ityala lamawele* [Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1931] 66).

[14] See "ukuhlangana," Alfred Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*.

[15] In using the word, *umhlanganisi*, I take respectful notice of Peter Mtuze's hesitation to use this term in a secular context. As Mtuze points out, the term *umhlanganisi* in Ntsikana's hymn is used in reference "to God's power to reconcile even the irreconcilable" and this would "make the application of this lofty divine intervention inappropriate for Ntsikana" (e-mail to P. Midgley, June 2, 2005). However, Mtuze also notes that "a person can also, in his or her modest way, attempt to do so [i.e., be *umhlanganisi*], e.g. intermediaries such as Mandela, Mbeki in strife-torn countries."

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view governed by the principle of *ubuntu*—a basic human orientation towards one's fellow men, or African humanism (Saule, "Images of Ubuntu" 3)—*ukuhlangana* and its different forms can become a useful way of describing a local sense of belonging in/to Africa, particularly with reference to nineteenth-century literature.

The second term, *tussenskap* (in-between-ness), was coined by G.A. Jooste in 1990 and has since gained considerable currency in Afrikaans literary criticism. *Tussenskap* is used to define a state of living between opposing alternatives and, ultimately, of shaping a sense of identity within the liminal space created between these alternatives. As Jooste himself writes,

> tussenskap [hang saam] met tematiese verskynsels soos innerlike tweespalt, keuses tussen lojaliteite en die onvermydelike soeke na geestelike tuistes te midde van ontwykende vastigheid. Veralgemenend kan 'n mens sê dat die soeke na nuwe geestelike tuistes gepaard gaan met 'n versaking van tradisionele waardes en 'n modernistiese onafhanklikheid en intellektuele afstandelikheid.
>
> [*Tussenskap* is closely related to such phenomena as inner strife, choices between loyalties and the unavoidable search for spiritual places of belonging in the midst of elusive certainty. In general one could say that the search for new spiritual homes is coupled with a neglect of traditional values and a modernistic independence and intellectual detachment.]
>
> ("Vreemdelingskaptema" 140–41)

In an article co-written with Valerie Hanekom ("Die tussenskap van Erwin in *Casspirs en Campari's* van Etienne van Heerden"), Jooste explores the concept in greater depth.

Mtuze suggests, therefore, that the use of *umxolelanisi* (the peacemaker) in a secular context to refer to Ntsikana's role would be preferred. This is, as he explains, the word used by St. Paul in the Xhosa Bible to describe "how we were reconciled with God through the death of Jesus Christ." However, Mtuze's suggestion that humans can, in their own flawed way, strive towards the sense of wholeness and perfection contained in the term *umhlanganisi* makes the use of the term in a secular context all the more appealing to me, as it implies that being or becoming *umhlanganisi* is a process rather than a state. Precedence for using the word in a secular context can also be found in Mqhayi's poem on the Battle of Amalinde (see n.13 supra).

A *tussenskapper* (a person who finds him- or herself in a position of *tussenskap*), as he and Hanekom envision him or her, functions in "die saambestaan van teenstellings of opponerende ideologiese ruimtes binne die Suid-Afrikaanse sosio-politieke werklikheid" (the co-existence of contradictions or opposing ideological spaces within the South African socio-political reality—50). The *tussenskapper* is a mediator, or bridging figure, between the ideological opposites (50); is aware of being in a liminal space and is aware of this dilemma and of having to make a choice between these extremes (52); undergoes, or agrees to undergo, a change of lifestyle; embodies a sense of individuality that is expressed in a norm-breaking action; exhibits a juxtaposition of conflicting positions within his or her world of experience; is committed to finding solutions to his or her own position as *tussenskapper* and is not necessarily concerned with bringing about reconciliation or synthesis between the opposites; and undertakes a physical or inner journey that involves a search for the self, or a sense of belonging and peace (57). As Hanekom and Jooste note, the *tussenskapper* shows some characteristics that can be likened to Colin Wilson's outsider, but unlike the outsider, the *tussenskapper* is involved in his community (58, n. 3). The *tussenskapper* also bears a resemblance to Lotman's "movable characters" and can be seen as the epic hero who does not hesitate to cross boundaries (56; 58, n. 8).

Of these characteristics, it is the *tussenskapper's* role as a bridging figure, as a person willing to cross boundaries and perform a norm-breaking action in search of a new spiritual home and a sense of belonging, as well as the willingness to undergo a change of lifestyle that are of particular interest within the context of my dissertation. I would, however, argue that *tussenskap* need not necessarily involve a neglect of traditional values, but that, on the contrary, it can reveal an acute awareness of traditional values, as is evident in the *tussenskapper's* willingness to cross traditional cultural boundaries in search of a new spiritual home. However, the traditional values that the *tussenskapper* is aware of and chooses are not necessarily those "traditional" values advocated or adhered to by one or both of the cultures between which the *tussenskapper* finds him- or herself. The validity of the values within the *tussenskapper's* newly-created spiritual space are determined by their usefulness within the context.

It is the ability to choose contextually expedient cultural norms and values that aligns the *tussenskapper* most strongly with the *umhlanganisi*. In most instances, both the *tussenskapper* and the *umhlanganisi* display similar characteristics—Ntsikana, Gquma, Coenraad de Buys, Olive Schreiner's Waldo, or Arthur Fula's Carolina Dhlamini come to mind as figures who embody elements of either one or both concepts. What differentiates the *tussenskapper* and the *umhlanganisi* is, perhaps, the fact that the *tussenskapper* is often forced into this liminal space and *tussenskap* thus becomes survival technique, while the *umhlanganisi* chooses to inhabit this liminal space. This provides the *umhlanganisi* with a sense of agency that can be lacking in the case of the *tussenskapper*. The *umhlanganisi* also regards *ubuntu* as more central in establishing an integrated sense of belonging.

The investigation into the usefulness of these terms is still in progress and is, at times, tentative and exploratory. It is an initial formulation of the thinking that has emerged from my discussions of the texts, and I fully intend to explore the possibilities further. However, in the meantime, the use of these terms rather than the vocabulary of contemporary postcolonial discourse is part of a desperate plea for (South) Africans to be allowed to engage critically with their literary heritage on their own terms and in their own language.

By employing these terms, I feel I have begun to see (South) Africa as a "network of points of affinity" (Appiah, *In My Father's House* 7)—a methodology that I believe contains enormous potential for identity-formation throughout Africa. Languages, literatures, world views and critical analyses converge like roads leading to the same destination: if we pause long enough to investigate these "points of affinity," if we reach out and draw these converging strands on the map of language and literature towards each other, we may be able to link them, to make them intersect in concrete ways; perhaps even place a stone or two on those points of intersection so that the individual strands do not drift apart again. Perhaps those stones could form the foundations of new *izivivane* along the pathways of our minds. Perhaps. It is not entirely fanciful to dream such dreams. In his analysis of the ways in which post-apartheid theatre in South Africa has scrutinized its relationship to Europe and European drama, Michael Carklin likens the role of the playwright to that of an archaeologist who, "as [he or she] digs through layers, dusts off shards, and pieces together fragments…encounters a confluence (or divergence) of time, space, knowledge, prediction and imagination" ("Dramatic Excavations" 30). By using the metaphor of the archaeologist at work, Carklin shows how two recent South African plays, *Faustus in Africa* (1995) and *Ubu & the Truth Commission* (1997; published 1998), in drawing on and responding to Goethe's *Faust* and Jarry's *Ubu* plays, become "confluences of sources, ideas, concerns" (30).[16]

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[16] Just as the apparently seamless movement in these plays through time and space and across the languages of South Africa has allowed South African playwrights to explore the relationship with colonization and to offer a thought-provoking perspective on the violent atrocities of the past, so the implications of inter-linguistic and inter-cultural confluence, of discovering points of affinity, have bamboozled literary scholars in other parts of the world. While working on his verse translation of *Beowulf*, Seamus Heaney was faced with "the vexed question…of the relationship between nationality, language, history and literary tradition in Ireland" (*Beowulf*, "Introduction" xxiv). Confronted not only by the historical distance and the strangeness of the Anglo-Saxon language he knew only through study, but also by his own sense of Irish nationalism, Heaney attempted to find a way in which he could make this text belong to him; or, possibly, in which he could make himself belong in his text. "The word 'whiskey'," he writes

> is the same word as the Irish and Scots Gaelic word *uisce*, meaning water, and…the River Usk in Britain is therefore to some extent the River Uisce (or Whiskey); and so in my mind the stream was suddenly turned into a kind of linguistic river of rivers…. The place on the language map where the Usk and the *uisce* coincided was definitely a place where the spirit might find a loophole, an escape route from what John Montague has called "the partitioned intellect," a way into some unpartitioned linguistic country, a region where one's language would not be a simple badge of one's ethnicity…. (xxiv–v)

Heaney finds the possibility of belonging in the linguistic and cultural shifts he encounters within the text he translates; in the moment where he recognizes the confluence of *uisce* with "whiskey," that historical moment where two otherwise disparate traditions collide and inform each other, Heaney is able to belong. This is a point of linguistic affinity, but also of cultural affinity and, ultimately, recognition of what Mark Sanders calls a sense of the "folded-in-ness" of our being (*Complicities* 9).

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Whether we accept our past as part of a "shared problematic" and see our world as a "network of points of affinity," as "confluences of sources, ideas, concerns," as a "linguistic river of rivers" (Heaney xxiv), or as *izivivane* along the pathways that traverse South Africa, articulating our unity in diversity can only take place once we have reached a clearer understanding of what constitutes a "shared problematic" and have begun to understand what we mean by "mutual implication" or complicity in a history of difference. We become complicit in the history of apartheid through our responses to situations as much as through our material circumstances: in 1983, Ezekiel Mphahlele, an outspoken critic of apartheid, was consulted by the Publications Appeal Board (PAB) as a "black expert" who would be able to judge whether Ayi Kwei Armah's *Why are We so Blest?* (1972) was an undesirable publication or not. Mphahlele's response reveals a high level of irritation and disdain for the Board:

> The history of black political activism in this country displays no signs that a black readership would be incited by Armah to kill off whites.... People do not wait for a novelist or a poet or a playwright to play around with images and symbols to incite them to strike or march in the streets or revolt. There are more immediate and direct forces that impel to act against authority. (qtd in de Lange, *The Muzzled Muse* 134)

However, no amount of irritation or disdain can make us shy away from the uncomfortable question: did the very act of submitting a response to the PAB implicate Mphahlele, however tenuously, in the machinations of the Board? If we accept Sanders' revised conception of complicity, then unequivocally: yes. And if this is indeed a moment of mutual complicity, then untangling the nature of that complicity becomes a problematic that is shared between supporters and opponents of censorship (and apartheid). Further analysis of such a shared problematic can bring us closer to an

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The shared etymology of a single word joins what at times appears to be an irreconcilable gulf between two peoples; we can either focus on the subsequent division and those forces that sustain the division, or we can begin to delve back into the past to find those moments where *uisce* and Whiskey flow together and become one.

understanding of how both Mphahlele and the members of the Board saw themselves belonging in the community.

Due to the polysemic nature of South African literature in its many languages, untangling the shared problematic that underlies the work of South African writers necessitates comparative study. To cite Brown's example: although the individual literary and social contributions of John Dube, Isaiah Shembe, Mahatma Ghandi and William Plomer have all received critical attention, little attention has been paid to the way in which these individuals, who all lived in the general area of the Inanda valley at the beginning of the twentieth century, interacted with one another.[17] We know that they worked in close proximity, that they came into contact with each other, that they responded to the same historical events and stimuli. In their own way, each of them contributed something to the way in which South Africans have come to view themselves and their past. Yet, how did they respond to each other? What was the response to a particular event or stimulus? What differences were there? What level of co-operation, antagonism, or cross-pollination occurred? It is only by studying these figures and events, as well their writings, in relation to each other that we can begin to unravel the complex sense of belonging that predicates many South African identities. In this way, too, we can begin to involve critical practice more pragmatically with politics beyond the realm of the academy, thus breaking down the "insistence [by some postcolonial critics] on the relative distance of literary scholarship from political concerns not connected to the academy" (Sole, "South Africa Passes the Posts" 145) and undertaking the task of incorporating the intellectual work of "ordinary people" as part of our critical practice (Serote, "Ordinary People" 159).

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[17] See in this regard Brown's own interpretation of Shembe, "Orality and Christianity: The Hymns of Isaiah Shembe and the Church of the Nazarites" (*Voicing the Text: South African Oral Poetry and Performance* [Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998] 119–64) and other writings, including the early work of William Plomer (specifically the short stories, "Ula Masondo" and "Portraits in the Nude" and his novel, *Turbott Wolfe*), the South African writings of Mahatma Ghandi and the writings of John L. Dube, ANC leader and author of the Zulu novel *Instila ka Tshaka* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1933), translated as *The Bodyservant of King Shaka* (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1951). Brown suggests that it is by looking at the ways these individuals responded to the various social and political stimuli that surrounded them, and also to each other, that we can begin to articulate the origins of our own contemporary sense of belonging in South Africa.

By suggesting that we approach the interactions between Dube, Shembe, Ghandi and Plomer as part of a shared problematic, Brown has begun to transcend the traditional language and cultural barriers that, historically, have made a comparative discussion of belonging in South Africa extremely difficult. In a discussion of the relationship between literature and history, and the way in which both literature and history have shaped the way we perceive ourselves in modern South Africa, Stephen Clingman turns to Sol Plaatje's epic novel, *Mhudi*. What strikes Clingman is how, in the novel, Plaatje succeeds in changing the question of belonging from "*who* belongs in South Africa to its much more productive historical form of *how* and *on what terms* that belonging should occur" ("Literature and History" 153). By suggesting that we look at belonging in South Africa in terms of a shared problematic rather than in terms of past differences, Brown has made it possible for scholars to determine "how and on what terms" we belong, rather than whether we belong.

As Clingman points out, literature and history in South Africa often run parallel ("Literature and History"), and it is virtually impossible to discuss literature in South Africa without taking note of the political and historical referents that mark the production of texts. In discussing the relationship between politics and history, we should remain mindful that when we engage in historical study of this kind, we have to be aware of both the extrinsic and the intrinsic history: we should not only look at the texts that stand as testimony to the past; we should also look at the "determinative effect [that literature and society have had] on our lives" (Chapman, *Southern African Literatures* 5). A critical practice that enables us to proceed in this way must, as Terry Eagleton points out with reference to Lucien Goldmann's theory of genetic structuralism, "[move] constantly between text, world vision and history, adapting each to the others" (*Marxism and Literary Criticism* 34).

What Eagleton calls "world vision" is, in fact, a recognition of the fact individuals and societies can construct identity in different ways, often on the basis of world views that differ fundamentally from those of the metropole. In his discussion of the interaction between tradition and modernity in South America, Nestor Canclini argues that there needs to be a recognition of the fact that the modern world "is not made only by those who have modernist projects" (*Hybrid Cultures* 107), and that history consciously and actively engages with the present, informing it and shaping it in various ways. Canclini recognises the rather obvious point that in developing countries—such as those of South America or Africa—the traditional and the modern exist side by side. Critical theory that focuses only on issues of modernity fails to recognise that "the meaning and value of modernity derives not only from what separates nations, ethnic groups, and classes, but also from the sociocultural hybrids in which the traditional and the modern are mixed" (2).

Before we can properly begin "experiencing the determinative effect" that contemporary literature has had on our lives (Chapman, *Southern African Literatures* 5), we have to gain a thorough understanding of how South African literature has responded to and interacted with its literary ancestors, of how the traditional and the modern co-exist in our society. My aim, in part, is therefore to undertake the preliminary work of unravelling the complex ways in which selected writers in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa responded to each other and to their political environment at key moments while South Africa was still a British possession; that is, roughly between 1806 and 1961.

Yet, despite the boldness of my intentions, I proceed with caution: as John Matshikiza notes in his introduction to Brett Bailey's *The Plays of Miracle and Wonder*, "to be a white man dabbling in black territory is still taboo—to both sides" (6).

Re-engaging with the past in a way that takes note of the manner in which it co-exists with the present enables us to re-utilize the distinctions created by traditional terminology, and also to move beyond mere thematic concerns and to initiate a discussion that implicates South African literature in its totality. In a culturally and linguistically diverse country such as South Africa, such a shift requires a comparative, interdisciplinary approach to literature, one that recognizes the interaction that occurs between languages and literatures and takes cognizance of the specificities of the region.

In their introduction to *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (1996), Werbner and Ranger highlight the postcolonial imagination as a "highly specific and locally created force [that] reconfigures personal knowledge in everyday life" (3). Such a "highly specific" local imagination requires more than a mere shifting, or refocusing, of the metropolitan gaze; it requires, initially at least, a destabilization and an inversion of the traditional gaze.[18] Once this inversion has been achieved, the gaze from the periphery needs to turn away from the metropole and focus on more local concerns. It is only once the centre has been thoroughly destabilized and inverted—not shifted—that the metropolitan gaze can be returned with authority and, ultimately, resisted. Only then can the position on what is currently perceived as the periphery be manipulated into an advantage and thereby used to create an independent, locally-produced sense of belonging. What is required, in the meanwhile, are strategies for destabilizing the metropolitan centre, inverting the gaze and, finally, creating an independent, "introspective" gaze from which a new sense of belonging can emerge—and these are precisely the concerns that confronted and confounded intellectuals subsequent to the formation of the Union of South Africa.

In her illuminating study of the imperial romance, Laura Chrisman manages to destabilize the metropolitan centre by confronting and questioning postcolonial discourse and its effectiveness in studying South African literature. Chrisman opposes Edward Said's concept of a unified metropolis and sides with Gayatri Spivak by arguing for the possibility of metropolitan opposition. However, rather than seeing the missionary "soul" and "subject" as determinants of colonial mentality (as Spivak does), Chrisman reverses this position and illustrates how the colonial writer in fact reveals considerable political agency in determining the metropolitan outlook of Victorian times. By showing convincingly how an arch-imperialist writer like Rider Haggard turned to the Shaka and the Zulu people for a conceptualization of nationalism in *Nada the Lily*, Chrisman reveals the fault-lines of a postcolonial discourse that marginalizes South Africa. Through her analyses of works by Rider Haggard, Olive Schreiner and Sol Plaatje, Chrisman is able to question the specificity of the time period and geographic location of a grand imperial narrative in the work of theorists such as Gayatri Spivak who, she contends, locates the formation in a single site: "Christian missionary ideology, early to mid-nineteenth century Britain, and the terrain of India," thus allowing this region to assume "theoretical primacy" in postcolonial literary studies (*Rereading the Imperial Romance* 1).[19] Chrisman argues that in establishing mid-Victorian India as the theoretical epicentre of postcolonial studies, Spivak encourages the relative marginality of regions such as South Africa. Thus, while individual authors do receive attention from academics outside South Africa, in the "critical metropoles of the UK and the USA, these writers' works tend to be analysed less as products of a historically particular, distinctive geo-political region and more as representative of the African continent" (2). Using Hannah Arendt's analysis of imperialism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) to emphasize the resulting tension that arises between South Africa's historical centrality and its relative marginality in postcolonial studies, Chrisman argues that South African literary studies should be given a more central place in critical discourse (*Rereading* 1).

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[18] It is important here to distinguish between an inverted discourse, which returns the gaze, and a "reverse discourse," such as that proposed by Chinweizu et al. in *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1983), which, as Appiah suggests, merely mirrors the discourse of the metropolis and thus becomes "entrapped within the Western cultural conjecture we affect to dispute" (*In my Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* [New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1992] 59–60).

It is a convincing argument, and one that Chrisman employs fruitfully in her own discussion of South African literature. But in the end, Chrisman still relies on the discourses of Europe to formulate her argument and this, in my view, reduces the strength of her position. Her emphasis on revindicating the historic centrality of Africa, I suggest, merely shifts the metropolitan gaze onto Africa: although Africa becomes the focus of study (which does allow it to flex a semblance of independence), it remains the object of a metropolitan gaze and brings us no closer to an understanding of either "Africa" as a construct or of the way belonging is articulated in South Africa.

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[19] Chrisman bases her reading of Spivak on the essay, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Postcolonial Criticism*, eds. Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gareth Stanton, and Willy Maley (London: Longman, 1997) 145–65. I have considered Chrisman's book more fully in a review essay, "Review of Laura Chrisman, *Rereading the Imperial Romance. British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner, and Plaatje*." H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews, Aug., 2001. http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews. 16 Aug., 2001.

Geoffrey Bennington makes a related point regarding centres and peripheries when he argues that we can only really interrogate the idea of "nation" or nationhood once we have destabilized its metropolitan centre ("Postal Politics" 121). The sense of achievement attained by approaching the nation from its centre is, he states, illusionary; we have merely shifted the boundaries to the centre, we have not actually negotiated or crossed them. However, approaching the nation from the periphery complicates matters: frontiers, like membranes, are porous. At the borders, the nation cannot be isolated and clearly defined, for there has to be a recognition of other nations and cultures—a recognition of difference, "not merely between centre and circumference, but between inside and outside" (121). For an instant, Bennington reveals the potential power of the (assumed) periphery: that it is porous, thus creating an opportunity for sharing and interaction that the hegemony of the centre does not allow. The border is not only a place where we can recognize differences, but also commonalities. But Bennington does not elaborate on this agency embedded in the periphery; instead, he constructs boundaries as points of suspicion, policing and refusing of entry, as much as they are points that are routinely "crossed or transgressed." Crossing boundaries becomes a transgression that in his view ultimately destroys "the credibility of grand narratives" (123).

Yet this is not the only possibility embedded in the border: along the porous periphery, ideas and concepts mingle more readily, more noticeably, and seemingly with less inhibition. As with cellular structures, the traffic across borders is not necessarily uni-directional and the border is less fixed because of this constant interchange of ideas and bodies. For Bennington, borders suggest transgression and confrontation; yet this is not necessarily how it happens in reality. To see border crossings only as transgressions is to ignore the ease with which ideas, like cellular fluids, can be equally shared along the border.

As long as there is an acceptance of the metropolitan centre in postcolonial studies, the return of the colonial gaze from the periphery is a transgression that destroys not only the grand imperial myth, but also the possibility of constructing an independent sense of being or belonging at a particular point on the periphery, such as post-Union South Africa, which was/is often perceived (even by its own writers), as a periphery.[20] Still, by approaching the concept of a "nation" from the periphery, Bennington destabilizes the centre and allows us to articulate the fissures that appear in the imagined community. While borders remain intact and undeniably real, South Africans need to embrace the space created by these fissures and use the implication of diffusion—of sharing, rather than of difference or separateness—they herald as the focal point of a new sense of belonging. As Duncan Brown suggests with regard to reading together the writings of Shembe, Plomer, Ghandi and Dube,

> the point would be to emphasise that a full understanding of these figures, their historical "moment," and their continuing influence requires a sense of their interactions, collusions and antagonisms. ("National Belonging" 768)

It is only by looking at the different, and often strikingly similar, responses to the social and political environment—in other words, by investigating the fissure-spaces created in the course of their interactions—that we can begin to develop a sense of how these writers adapted to and interpreted modernity in a local sense. In this way, we can establish a shared problematic and begin to construct a more coherent and inclusive sense of what it meant to be "South African" in the years subsequent to the formation of the Union.

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[20] See Roy Campbell "Fetish Worship," *Voorslag* 1.2 (1926): 3–19 for an example; or N.P. van Wyk Louw, "Uithoek en Middelpunt [Centre and Outpost]," *Versamelde Prosa* [Collected Prose] (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986) 411–14, or even B.W. Vilakazi's comment that "Bantu writers *themselves* [must] learn to love their languages and use them as vehicles for thought, feeling and will ("African Drama and Poetry," *South African Outlook* 69 [1939]: 167).

South Africans have been negotiating these fissures for ages in an attempt to establish a sense of belonging in their country. In 1926, General Jan Smuts outlined his philosophy of holism in a book, *Holism and Evolution*. One thought from the book particularly struck the Afrikaans writer and critic, N.P. van Wyk Louw: that it pleased Smuts to know that his theories were deemed important enough to warrant international attention, living as he did in "this far-off corner of the world" (qtd in Louw, "Uithoek en Middelpunt" 411). Louw objected to this phraseology, arguing that such a statement reflected a colonized mind. By stating that South Africa is a "far-off corner," Louw argued, Smuts automatically assumed that there is a centre, which in his case happened to be London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Louw then pointed out that there are in fact many centres and that their location depended on the world view of the writer. In order to escape the colonial mindset and to come into our own as a people or nation, Louw contended, we need to shed our colonial mindset and realize that we, too, are a centre. It is only once we are freed from the strictures of a colonial mindset that we can begin to assert our own identity as a nation. Although Louw was speaking largely about the formation and maintenance of Afrikaner identity in his essay, his argument nonetheless highlights the importance of the regional, of shifting the centre.

Shortly after Smuts wrote *Holism and Evolution*, one of Louw's contemporaries, the African writer and critic, Herbert Dhlomo, wrote that African writing in the future would have to be based securely in African traditions—that it should borrow from and adapt western styles, and take note of the possibilities embedded in western literary traditions, but that the core of an African literature would come from Africa itself ("Drama and the African" 7). In a more recent article on the nature of a future South African culture, Kelwyn Sole says that during the 1980s, several critics, including Michael Chapman,[21] argued that "cultural activists and writers…should begin building an art and literature based on the culture of all South Africa's peoples, while the culture of the majority…should be highlighted" ("Democratising Culture" 12). A shift of this nature indicates that, for some critics at least, Dhlomo's vision still remains largely unfulfilled, and that the present is a good time to begin remedying this situation. If we are to follow Van Wyk Louw and Bennington's arguments that there are no peripheries, and many centres, and that it is sometimes useful to approach the concept of the nation from the periphery, or if we are to begin to heed Dhlomo's call to base the core of our literary and critical practice in South Africa, then we have to turn our attention to the world views that emanate from the African continent and focus on the local as a centre and on the literature produced in this localized centre and its circumference ("Postal Politics" 121).

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[21] See Michael Chapman, "The Critic in a State of Emergency: Towards a Theory of Reconstruction," *Kunapipi* 13.1/2 (1991): 1–11, for a detailed account of Chapman's argument.

During a discussion I had with Guy Butler in December 2000, he remarked that South African literature, by its very nature, was regional. In saying this, Butler did not necessarily imply that there are no over-arching strands that join the regions together, nor that we should devolve discussion into a promotion of only the regional: he merely meant that in terms of establishing a shared problematic, regions offer fruitful points of comparison as they present slightly more homogeneous linguistic and cultural groups. Focusing on the region does not deny either the importance or necessity of a more comprehensive study of the shared problematic of the country as a whole; the region is simply more manageable.

Seen in this context, the eastern Cape becomes an ideal point of departure: it is at once a periphery, a border, and a centre. Shifting the focus of an investigation into South African literature to the eastern Cape provides a unique perspective on the country and its problems. It is the area that reflects the longest period of conflict and compromise between the peoples of South Africa. Historically, the eastern Cape is known as the Border or Frontier region—it was, for many years, the eastern boundary of the Cape Colony. Beyond (and also behind) the Eastern Frontier lay the land of the amaXhosa. In the nineteenth century, emaXhoseni was an area torn by conflict and strife, locked in a seemingly never-ending struggle for survival and control of the physical space inhabited by both colonizer and colonized. Soon after colonial settlement, the area outside Grahamstown became the seat of Xhosa government under Ngqika, the chief erroneously recognized by the colonial government as the paramount chief of the amaXhosa. In 1854, Grahamstown, then still the main city in the region, became the seat of the first Parliament of the Cape Colony. In 1878, the British forces finally defeated the amaXhosa and annexed the remainder of their land. Years before, in 1834, Piet Retief, the mythologized hero of the Great Trek, the Afrikaner exodus from British colonial rule, left from Grahamstown on his journey into the African interior.

It was at Lovedale, the mission station along the banks of the Tyumie River, that isiXhosa became the first indigenous language in South Africa to attain a written form. It is also, historically, the "home" of English writers who have come to be regarded as the historical "forebears" of South African literature: Thomas Pringle and Olive Schreiner. It was largely an Eastern Cape initiative that led to the formation of the South African Natives' National Congress (later renamed the African National Congress); it was in the Eastern Cape that the first independent African newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Opinions of the Dark People), appeared. Among the first Afrikaans writings, there is the story of Kaatje Kekkelbek "who came from Kat Rivier" in the heart of Ndlambe Xhosa territory, and a pamphlet by Louis Meurant, a resident of Cradock, about the possible secession of the eastern Cape.

With the discovery, first of diamonds and later of gold in the interior, the eastern Cape gradually lost its centrality in the political landscape of South Africa, but it remains a formative space for many South African identities. In the writing by people who grew up and lived in the region, the influence of an African cosmology is more immediately evident than it is within the wider ambit of South African literature. Through a comparative discussion of these literatures and the various ways in which they respond to and draw on local mythologies and world views, I hope to reach a point where it becomes possible to begin developing a critical discourse that is rooted firmly within an African world view and is not constructed primarily as a response to the critical theories of the metropole. But in order to achieve this, we have to work from the bottom up: we first need to see how the literatures interact with each other, how they draw on the same groundswell of tradition, myth and spirituality. It is a closer reading of this interaction between the literatures that forms the thrust of my research at this point.[22]

It is only when we understand how our literary ancestors interrogated their own world, how they responded to the histories and philosophies that they came to share and that helped to shape who they were, that we can begin the task of trying to understand the important ways in which modern writers re-engage with this heritage. Only then will we be able to understand how contemporary writers like Zakes Mda, Chris Mann, Marguerite Poland, J.M. Coetzee and Etienne van Heerden have reinterpreted events and memories to reinforce their sense of belonging which, I believe, has always been there, but has never consciously been articulated in our critical practice.

South African literature is often reflective and rewrites its history consciously. Much of the literary history of South Africa is rooted in the eastern Cape: when Afrikaans writers eulogize or critique the Great Trek (*vide* F.A. Venter's "Gelofteland" trilogy), they return to the eastern Cape as a point of origin; when African writers draw on the history of their resistance to colonial domination, they return to emaXhoseni and to historical figures such as Nongqawuse (*vide* Herbert Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save*); when English writers look back at their own literary history, they place the roots among writers from the Eastern Cape (*vide* Butler's *Richard Gush of Salem*). In *Disgrace*, it is no coincidence that J.M. Coetzee returns to this region, to Salem, one of the first towns to be founded by the 1820 settlers. It is, arguably only here, in the heartland of British colonialism in South Africa, that he can explore the concerns of a post-apartheid white liberal, David Lurie.[23] Such conscious literary excursions into kwaXhosa provide more compelling reasons to return to this area to discover how contemporary writers have begun to redefine themselves and their place in Africa.

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[22] See in this regard Michael Chapman's response to a question about the relationship between theory and practice in South Africa:

> I think that in society like ours, theory should not predate practice. I think the practice should allow you to look at things and then try to make sense of them at more abstract levels. I don't think the other way round is helpful; it will lead us back into another round of neo-colonialism, which is in fact fairly widespread among intellectuals. ("There is no Essential Africanness" 83–84).

Among the amaXhosa, the people who were living in the area when the first missionaries and settlers arrived in kwaXhosa, a person is defined in terms of his or her origins. There are two traditional greetings that help to determine origin: "*Nisela mlambo mni*?" (Which river do you draw water from?), and "*Inkaba yakho iphi*?" (Where is your navel/afterbirth?). Both questions establish your ancestry and your social position in the community, as well as your geography. Traditionally, each Xhosa clan drew water from a specific river and by naming a river in response to the first question, one simultaneously reveals one's clan and the geographic location of one's ancestors. The second question refers to a traditional custom by which the placenta is buried outside the homestead at a person's birthplace. Answering the second question could locate a person even more specifically than the first. Both questions, however, have the same desired result: establishing ancestry and locating the community of origin.

A return to the place of your birth, whether physically or metaphorically in a dream or in fiction, is akin to returning to your ancestors and constitutes an affirmation of your identity and your sense of belonging in and to an integrated community. Returning home also helps to affirm and define the nature of your relationship with the ancestors, the *iminyanya*. The *iminyanya* live by and visit their ancestral homesteads, and so, in order to communicate effectively with your ancestors, you need to return to your ancestral home. In many instances, South African writers draw on personal experiences, or on family histories, as the sources of their fiction. What they are doing is in fact going home, returning to their ancestral roots and answering the question: *Inkaba yakho iphi*? Since the end of the nineteenth century, South African writers have used their writing as a way of establishing a sense of belonging. Through the decades and across languages and cultures, writers have often deployed their forebears as an integral part of their narrative to illustrate how the past affects the present, as well as the future. They rely on the interaction between the real world and the world of the ancestors, including the literary ancestors. In some cases, the return to ancestors as a creative source is oblique and barely discernable, while in others it is a conscious narrative ploy.

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[23] For the significance of the Eastern Cape as setting for the novel, see Gareth Cornwell, "*Disgrace*land: History and the Humanities in Frontier Country," *English in Africa* 30.2 (2003): 43–68.

I am particularly interested in the way in which ancestors have been used to achieve a sense of cultural identity. It is the way in which the writers in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa bring conflicting identities to the fore, the way in which they negotiate the conflicts that arise between their own, accepted cultural heritage, and the growing realisation that a new sense of identity lies embedded within these conflicts—an identity that has more in common with other cultures than history necessarily acknowledges.

Within amaXhosa society, a well-grounded sense of identity and belonging is dependent on a healthy relationship with the ancestral shades. The English term "shades" is an approximation of both the isiXhosa word *iminyanya* and the Latin word *umbra*. The ancient Romans readily acknowledged the existence of such shades and structured their lives around the presence of their ancestral shades in their lives. The South African cultural worker, Chris Mann, argues that what has been lost in modern times is the "acknowledgement [of the shades] as our spiritual selves" ("Towards a Perception of the Shades" 30).

Laurens van der Post made a similar argument 50 years ago: On March 3, 1954, he addressed the Psychological Club of Zurich on the topic of Africa. Van der Post titled his lecture *Mata Kelap or the Appearance of the Dark Eye in Africa: A Talk on the Invisible Origins of African Unrest*. The title was shortened to *The Dark Eye in Africa* when the lecture was published a year later (London: Hogarth Press, 1955). The *mata kelap* in the title of the lecture is a Malay expression ("mata" is the eye, and "kelap" means dark) that was used to describe a law-abiding citizen who suddenly went berserk and started murdering everyone in sight. People would say that he had become "mata kelap"; that his inner eye had darkened (51–52). According to Van der Post, the events in

Africa during the early 1950s (the Mau-Mau) were the first sign that Africa's inner eye was starting to grow dark:

> The black African's sense of security and of oneness with life had been shaken in a most profound way; his access to life's innermost meaning rudely barred. The spell of the European over him was not only breaking but his confidence in the European way of life was so shaken that, in a desperate effort to avert the disaster and annihilation which now seemed to threaten him from within, he turned back to the angry power of his disregarded, discredited and neglected spirits. (46)

Van der Post further argued that "[t]he conflict in Africa is at heart a battle about being and non-being; about having a soul of one's own or not having a soul at all" (46). The whites in Africa had discredited Africa's way of life, he said, and had forced Africa to reject its institutions, customs, initiation ceremonies and rituals on which it had relied for centuries to create a balance between itself and its environment.[24]

The meeting between western whites (who, Van der Post argues, have a long history of an awakening consciousness) and Africans (who still had a close link with their collective subconscious) was not to the advantage of either one of the parties at the time. In a discussion of the relationship between identity and Zulu ancestral shades, Mann notes that "two, or sometimes even three or more, linguistic groups of shades may coexist peacefully in a single person" ("Towards a Perception" 33).[25] Initially, we see only one of these groups—the one that shares a language with us—but as we get to know the person, other shades emerge.[26]

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[24] See in this regard also J.S. Cumpsty, "A Model of Religious Change in Socio-Cultural Disturbance," *Religion in Southern Africa* 1.2 (1980): 59–70.

[25] The quote in full reads:

> Two, or sometimes even three or more, linguistic groups of shades may coexist peacefully in a single person. When we communicate with such a person, the group which employs the same language as ours comes forward to make preliminary contact. If this continues for a significant period of time, the existence of the other groups will gradually be revealed, and thus a larger idea of the other person emerges. For character is formulated, and personality expressed, according to the language of the dominant shades. (Mann 33)

Mann is not the only scholar to have noted the influence of the ancestral shades in the lives of South Africans. Writing of the way in which South African writers have used narrative forms from other parts of the world and adapted them in unique ways to the South African environment, André Brink talks about the "magic" inherent in South African literature and this relation to magic realism as a South American tradition:

> This magic involves an acknowledgement of a more holistic way of approaching the world, an awareness of more things in heaven and earth than have been dreamt of in our philosophy, a free interaction between the worlds of the living and the dead, a rich oneiric stratum; also of ancestral—historical—commitment of the kind one encounters in the poetry of Masizi Kunene. It is informed by the thinking Kunene once illuminated for me when he explained why, in taking his leave from someone, he would never use the singular form *Sala gahle* ("Stay well") but always the plural, *Salani gahle*. "Because no-one is ever alone," he said. "You are always accompanied by all your spirits." ("Interrogating Silence" 25)

The idea of ancestral shades that are always with us, that constantly accompany us on our endeavours, is deeply ingrained in many South African cultures. As Chris Mann points out, these shades transcend linguistic and even cultural boundaries without conflict ("Towards a Perception" 33). In a country where linguistic and cultural boundaries are inseparable, and where the majority of people interact in multilingual and cross-cultural environments on a daily basis, the ability of the ancestral shades to move with ease between cultures and languages becomes significant with regard to identity formation.

John Henderson Soga has noted that the *iminyanya* are integral to maintaining coherence within the community (*AmaXosa Customs* 151). If these ancestral shades are indeed such a fundamental part of a South African world view as Soga claims and if they shape not only the individual, but also the community as a whole, then the way in which people interact with these shades becomes a potential shared problematic, a useful site for the interrogation of a new South African identity. As Chris Mann remarked in a personal communication to me, one option that Africa has to give to the world is the concept of the shades (e-mail, 11 April 2003). Once we are willing to acknowledge the importance of the shades that comprise us, we open up the possibility of a cross-linguistic, cross-cultural sense of identity and belonging. André Brink has already hinted at the presence of such a possibility in South African literature:

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[26] Nasrin Rahimieh also notes how different sides of a personality emerge in different languages in the introduction to her book, *Missing Persians: Discovering Voices in Iranian Cultural History* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001).

> The easy intercourse between the living and the dead forms an integral part of African oral traditions in languages like Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho; and from there it has spilled over into Afrikaans literature, much more than the writing of English-speaking white South Africans—although there are hints of it in some passages of Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (for example the pivotal story of the man who goes in search of the white bird, Truth).... In more specifically postmodernist writing this "magic" has been captured in masterly fashion by the Afrikaans novelist Etienne van Heerden's *Toorberg* (1986; translated in 1989 as *Ancestral Voices*), with its deceptive interweaving of the living and the dead, of past and present. (26)

If the shades of our ancestors truly do dwell among us and guide us, they can become the foundation for a new sense of belonging in and to the country. Furthermore, if the *iminyanya* do indeed permeate our literature, as Brink suggests they do, the role of literature in shaping a new South African identity becomes crucial.

The literary and cultural landscape of South Africa is littered with metaphorical *izivivane* compiled from stones placed there in literature. These stones come in different shapes and sizes, in different genres and languages; some have been placed there reverently, others carelessly tossed there by those who do not recognise the *izivivane* for what they are. Even so, they all add to the cultural pile that binds us together as our daily journeys converge and diverge. What we need to unearth, interrogate and ultimately reconstruct, are these moments throughout our past where our separate histories converge, where strangers meet and place a stone on their journey towards some ideological future—where we can begin to construct metaphorical *izivivane* that will stand as symbols of our shared past, our shared future. With the arrival of independence in South Africa, the journey from the past has ended; the journey into the future has barely begun: *Thixo ndincede; siph' amandla, nkosi wam.*[27]

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[27] God help me; grant me strength, oh Lord.

Chapter 3

Ukusungula: Ground-Breaking Literary Encounters in the Eastern Cape, 1800–1850

The mythology of a southern continent has haunted the European imagination for millennia—from Aristotle's postulations about a continental counterbalance anchoring the Mediterranean world in *Meteorologica*, through early modern travel writings, to Luis de Camões' depictions of the phantom Adamastor at the Cape of Storms in his *Os Lusiados*—leading Malvern van Wyk Smith to remark that "South Africa was invented before it was discovered" (*Grounds of Contest* 1). Equally old, perhaps even older, yet undocumented until very recently, are the oral traditions that occupied a central place in the mythologies of the people who inhabited the Cape before the arrival of the first European colonists in 1652.

The arrival of the Dutch East India Company colonists under the command of Jan van Riebeeck also heralded the arrival of the written word at the southern tip of Africa in the form of official diaries and accounts of exploratory journeys into the interior. One of the first tasks commissioned by Van Riebeeck—and duly noted as such in his *Daghregister* (33; trans. 37)—was breaking the soil to plant a garden for the refreshment station. The refreshment station soon developed into an ever-expanding colony in which a small number of the settlers took time from their labours to pen some verses in Latin or in Dutch. However, for the most part, settlers and colonists relied on the intellectual produce of Europe to feed their souls.

In 1796, Hubert Dirk Campagne wrote a satirical poem, "Historie van de Kaap zeer krachtig" (A History of the Cape Most Powerful) that showed how the usage of the

Dutch language at the Cape was already beginning to change (Kannemeyer, *Geskiedenis* I, 21). The poem lampooned the inept behaviour of the government during the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795. As a reward for his labours, Campagne was deported to England. The curious mixture of local expression and High Dutch in Campagne's language, as well as the way in which his poem revealed and resisted the collusion and complicity that characterized the colonial administration, would point the way for subsequent generations of local writers.

The arrival of the British generated some local writing in the form of Lady Anne Barnard's letters and John Barrow's account of his travels into the interior. Although several references are made to the languages of the indigenous peoples in the early diaries and travelogues, no mention is made of a local literary or oral tradition until, in 1807, Ludwig Alberti witnessed a Xhosa hunting party approaching the village after a hunt. Jeff Opland considers his description of "leaps" and "screams" to be one of the first eye-witness accounts of the Xhosa oral tradition (*Xhosa Oral Poetry* 3).

Alberti and other contemporary travellers formed the vanguard of a new generation of visitors and settlers who brought with them the enlightenment philosophy that had sprouted in their souls; with the settlers came the missionaries, filled with zeal and longing to till the African soil in the name of a European God. Sometime between 1799 and 1815, these early missionary labours paid off with the conversion of Ntsikana, an oral poet whose works were later transcribed as hymns that are still sung today. In subsequent discussions with his followers, Ntsikana used the isiXhosa verb, *ukusungula*, to describe the experience of his conversion. *Ukusungula* generally refers to the act of breaking the soil at the start of the planting season, but in the religious context, it means to renew, or to regenerate or convert (Hodgson, "The Genius of Ntsikana" 28).[1] Ntsikana's conversion was an act of self-discovery that unearthed the foundations of a new mythology of Africa, this time developed from within an African world view.

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[1] See also "ukuSungula," Alfred Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1899).

Ntsikana's moment of self-discovery occurred shortly before the Reverend John Ross brought the first printing press to emaXhoseni. Within fourteen days of the arrival of the press, his colleague, John Bennie, had also broken new ground when he printed off the first reading sheet in isiXhosa, thus "reducing to form and rule this language which had hitherto floated in the wind" and reinventing it as a literary language (qtd in Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu* 3).

For the amaXhosa, the introduction of a written form of their language would have enormous ramifications: writing stood, seemingly, in diametric opposition to the oral traditions that had previously sustained them, and over the next century, this new medium of expression would contribute to a radical overhaul in the way the amaXhosa perceived themselves and their society. Writing became not only a symbol of "progress," but also, in the face of an awareness that the written word could potentially destroy the oral tradition and the old way of life, a means of preserving aspects of the traditional ways for subsequent generations.[2] Yet it would be incorrect to assume from this that the desire to preserve elements of the oral tradition in writing, or to transpose them into the written form, necessarily means—as Walter Ong implies in his essay, "Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought"—that oral cultures are conservative (Ong 23–50). As Jeff Opland points out in his article on Xhosa perceptions of written forms, "The Image of the Book," writers in isiXhosa soon conceived of imaginative ways in which to reconcile the apparent differences between oral and written creative forms.[3] Derek Peterson makes a similar point in *Creative Writing* when he looks at the way in which

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[2] For a more complete discussion of the transition from an oral to a literate culture in the nineteenth century, see two articles by Jeff Opland: "The Transition From Oral to Written Literature in Xhosa, 1823–1909," *Oral Tradition and Literacy: Changing Visions of the World: Selected Conference Papers: University of Natal, Durban, July 1985*. eds. R. A. Whitaker and E. R. Sienaert. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre, 1986. 135–50; and "The Image of the Book in Xhosa Oral Poetry," *Current Writing* 7.2 (1995): 31–47.

[3] See also Chapter 6 for a discussion of the way in which Mqhayi subverted the form and content of the novel in *Ityala lamawele*.

Gikuyu in Kenya used writing to meet their own needs. In his critique of Walter Ong's work, Peterson notes that "once we conceive of reading as more than a private, cognitive exercise, we are free to explore the wider intellectual field in which readers and writers compose" (*Creative Writing* 6)—and thus, by implication, we are also free to explore more creatively the effect of writing on an oral culture.

If the introduction of writing into their society affected the amaXhosa to the extent of causing a revision of their world view, then the material reality of living in the unstable environment of the Eastern Cape also had a profound effect on the way in which settler writers like Andrew Geddes Bain and Thomas Pringle in their writing interpreted and adapted the world views they had brought with them from across the ocean. This chapter explores the ways in which this material reality of the exposure to new world views influenced the creative work produced by these individuals.

The arrival of missionaries in emaXhoseni coincided with a period of great upheaval among the amaXhosa. Phalo, king of the amaXhosa, had two sons: Gcaleka and Rharhabe. In part to alleviate a diplomatic embarrassment that arose when two bridal parties from different chieftaincies arrived at his palace on the same day, Phalo divided his Royal House, and thus his two sons each inherited a separate dynasty. However, Gcaleka, as the heir to the Great House, remained paramount chief of the Xhosa. Gcaleka also had a mystical experience, known as *ukuthwasa*, that identified him as a diviner or traditional healer. His dual position as an *igqira*[4] and king provided him with significant power. He soon became a threat to Rharhabe, who then planted a seed of dissent among the junior chiefs under Gcaleka's control. Gcaleka defeated Rharhabe, forcing him to cross the Kei River and settle in the area around the present-day town of Stutterheim. As a result of this initial split in the amaXhosa nation, the Rharhabe Xhosa became the first to encounter both the missionaries and the wave of dissatisfied white settlers who were moving eastwards.

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[4] A distinction needs to be made from the outset between the following isiXhosa words: *igqira*, *igqwira* and *ugqira*: *igqira* refers to a traditional healer or diviner; *igqwira* refers to a person who engages in witchcraft; and *ugqira* refers to a medical practitioner in the western sense. Early translators seldom made the distinction, thus rendering both *igqira* and *igqwira* as "witchdoctor," an inaccuracy that has helped perpetuate stereotypes regarding traditional healers in South Africa.

Gcaleka survived his father by only three years. His son, Khawuta, was a weak ruler who was soon overshadowed by his uncle, Nxito. As a result of the upheaval among the Gcaleka, Rharhabe was able to strengthen his own position west of the Kei River. However, despite the fact that Rharhabe wielded significant power, some chiefs refused to acknowledge him. In 1782, both Rharhabe and his heir, Mlawu, were killed in a battle against the abaThembu clan, leaving an infant son, Ngqika, to inherit the chieftaincy. Mlawu's brother, Ndlambe, became the regent for the young Ngqika. When Ngqika came of age, Ndlambe was unwilling to part with his authority, thus initiating a lengthy series of battles that culminated in the battle of Amalinde in 1818, where Ngqika was finally defeated.[5] Ngqika subsequently appealed to the colonial government for assistance and for his efforts he was recognized—incorrectly—as paramount chief of the amaXhosa by the British. Among Ngqika's allies were several independent Khoi groups and a band of Boer adventurers led by Coenraad de Buys,[6] who was at the time married to Ngqika's widowed mother.[7]

It was at the height of these battles of succession in emaXhoseni, in 1796, that William of Orange ceded the Cape of Good Hope to the British for safekeeping.[8] It was

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[5] The battle of Amalinde was precipitated by, among other things, Ngqika's abduction of Ndlambe's bride, the legendary beauty, Thutula. Several authors have used these events in their writing, inter alia, J.J.R. Jolobe, "Thutula," *Umyezo* (Johannesburg: Wits UP, 1936; translated as "Thutula," *Poems of an African* [Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1946]) and Chris Mann, *The Sand Labyrinth* (1990).

[6] See Chapter 7 for further discussion of Coenraad de Buys and his position *vis-à-vis* literary responses to the nineteenth century, particularly in Sarah Gertrude Millin, *The King of the Bastards* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949).

[7] The information in the preceding paragraphs is drawn from Jeff Peires's *The House of Phalo* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981), chapter 2.

[8] Technically, this was not necessary, as William of Orange was at the time monarch of

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returned to the Dutch in 1802 and then finally annexed as a British colony in 1806. Also in 1796, the London Missionary Society obtained permission to send missionaries to the Cape. While there were already some Moravian missionaries at Genadendal in the Western Cape, the London Missionary Society expressly charged the new missionary, Johannes Theodosius van der Kemp, with ministering to amaXhosa in the area beyond the Kei River. Van der Kemp's stay in emaXhoseni was short, for ongoing hostilities in the area forced him to abandon his mission in 1799. No more missionaries were allowed to enter the area, despite Ndlambe's requests, until the Reverend Joseph Williams founded a mission in the Kat River area in 1816, when an illusion of stability had once more settled on the region. However, Van der Kemp's labours were not totally wasted. His influence, directly or indirectly, produced at least one significant conversion: Ntsikana.[9]

Ntsikana lived from about 1780 to 1821, a lifespan that coincides roughly with the arrival of the first wave of Dutch farmers in emaXhoseni and the establishment of the first permanent mission station at Tyumie. Ntsikana was the son of Gaba, a hereditary councillor to Rharhabe. His upbringing was traditional, and after his father's death Ntsikana became a councillor and won renown for his oratorical skills. As a councillor, he cautioned chief Ngqika against fighting at Amalinde and also against seeking help from the colonial government, but his advice was ignored. Ntsikana's caution proved well-founded: shortly after enlisting the help of the colonists, the amaNgqika were forced out of the Kat River area by the government to make way for a no-man's land which would act as a buffer between the settlers and the amaXhosa. Ntsikana's central

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both realms. However, since his position in the Netherlands was precarious, it made strategic sense to transfer possession of the Colony to the British crown as a personal safeguard, as the king could then use the British Navy to defend the territory against the French.

[9] See Janet Hodgson, *Ntsikana's Great Hymn* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1980) for a discussion of the possible influence of both Van der Kemp and another missionary, John Read, on Ntsikana. See particularly the discussion of "Ingom' enqukuva" [The Poll-headed Hymn] on page 9.

position in history was recognized when in 1909 the founding members of the SANNC (later the ANC) acknowledged him as the most influential African figure of the nineteenth century (Hodgson, *Ntsikana's Great Hymn* 56).

Ntsikana's importance in the spread of Christianity among the amaXhosa, and the crucial nature of the role he played in offering a new world vision to the amaXhosa people, has been the focus of a significant body of work. As Janet Hodgson points out, the importance of Ntsikana's work lay in the integrative way in which he incorporated new ideas into an existing cosmology. By contrast, the missionaries' approach involved "a grafting on of foreign elements which was divisive. The recipients invariably fitted the new forms and content with old meanings, and two sets of forms and contents existed side by side for a considerable length of time" ("Genius" 24).

Amidst the political upheaval that split the amaXhosa (and was to split them yet again between those who were Christianised [*amagqoboka*] and those who remained loyal to ancestral traditions and practices [*amaqaba*][10]), Ntsikana had a vision that he interpreted as a calling from God. In terms of chronology, Ntsikana's vision occurred before the arrival of Reverend Williams and because of this, many believe that he received his divine inspiration independent of missionary influence; however, other oral evidence suggests that he had previously met Williams's missionary forerunners in emaXhoseni, Johannes Van der Kemp and John Read.[11] Ntsikana's vision has become legendary:

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[10] Since division among the amaXhosa was often along the lines of those who believed—either in the Christian God, or in prophecies—and those who did not, the use of the generic terms "believers" and "unbelievers" can become confusing. I therefore use the isiXhosa terms to avoid confusion.

[11] Both Read and Van der Kemp were later to invoke the scorn of the colonists for their work among the Hottentots and for their liberal views. In the twentieth century, some writers revisited Read's contribution to South African society. See Sarah Gertrude Millin, *God's Stepchildren* (London: Constable and Co., 1929). The novel is based on the life of John Read, although the author disguises his identity by calling the principal character Andrew Flood. Millin eventually fuses the histories of Coenraad de Buys and

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> [It] is supposed to have taken place one morning in his cattle byre, when a bright ray of light from the rising sun struck his favourite ox Hulushe. There were further strange happenings later that day at a wedding celebration. Three times a strong wind is said to have arisen when Ntsikana tried to join in the dancing. After this he took his family home and they were amazed when on the way he washed the red ochre from his body in the Gqora River. They thought him either mad or bewitched. Next day, Ntsikana continued to act strangely, remaining at the gate of his cattle byre and humming an unfamiliar chant over and over again. He eventually added words to the music and it became the "Poll-headed" or "Round" hymn. (25)

Visions were not unusual to the amaXhosa. Above all, dreams and visions were recognised as the vehicles through which the ancestral spirits communicated with the living. The amaXhosa accepted that what Ntsikana had experienced was *ukuthwasa*, a trance-like experience that diviners undergo when they are called to their profession. For all intents and purposes, Ntsikana's vision had singled him out as a diviner.

The traditional god of the amaXhosa was seldom called on directly. He was a distant god, a creator who did not meddle in the affairs of his people. Dalidephu (or Qamata) was only called on in the event of war and other events that threatened the amaXhosa. In part, it was Ntsikana's reliance on the traditional means of communication that appealed to his followers. His concept of a more clearly defined godhead that exuded compassion and who could be appealed to directly provided relief amidst the political turmoil in which the amaXhosa were embroiled.

After the initial vision in the kraal, Ntsikana immersed himself in the river and washed off the red ochre that covered his body. Thus Ntsikana symbolically cast aside the old ways and entered a new phase of his life.[12] Oral tradition has it that Ntsikana

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John Read when their lives become entwined in *The Burning Man* (London: William Heinemann, 1952). Read, and particularly his descendants, also feature in Afrikaans literature. See Etienne van Heerden, *Toorberg* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986; translated as *Ancestral Voices* [London: Viking, 1993]).

[12] Even this gesture, as Hodgson points out in *Ntsikana's Great Hymn*, is rooted in tradition. In the final phase of the *abakwetha* rituals, young initiates (*amakrwala*) shed

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would refer to his experience by the use of the word *ndasungulwa*—which can be rendered into English as "the day I was renewed" (28). As Hodgson notes, the root word, *ukusungula*, also refers to the breaking of the soil at the start of the new season, thus signalling the beginning of the new Xhosa year. The symbolic removal of red ochre—a symbol of Xhosa traditionalism—becomes a trope in many of the early Xhosa works, including H.M. Ndawo's *uHambo lukaGqobhoka* [Gqobhoka's Journey; or, The Convert's Journey] (1909).

Ntsikana can be considered the first local creative talent, in that the four hymns he composed are the first creative works that can accurately be ascribed to an individual. The hymns were sung whenever his followers gathered. His first hymn, "Ingom' enqukuva" (the "Poll-Headed Hymn") was composed the day after his conversion. In the hymn, Ntsikana "names the places where the Word of God has been heard, [thus] showing the need of a wandering people to locate and fix things" (Hodgson, "Genius" 28). The amaXhosa were not a nomadic people, so Ntsikana's reference to a wandering people can only be taken as a metaphor for spiritual development. In a world of contending diviners who were trying to shape the society, often in accordance with the dictates of their own self-interest, Ntsikana's desire for stability is understandable. His desire to "fix things" corresponds metaphorically with Christ's mission to heal the sick and he calls for a peaceful approach to conflict, asking his followers to arm themselves with "the assegai of God" rather than with conventional weapons. The shift toward a more metaphoric interpretation of resistance must have offered an attractive alternative to the warfare that had ravaged the country for decades.[13]

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their old garments and receive a new garment; they also wash the ochre off their bodies and literally burn their past as they emerge from the initiation rituals to be reincorporated into society (*Great Hymn* 59). See also Aubrey Elliott, *The Magic World of the amaXhosa* (London: and Johannesburg: Collins, 1972) and P.T. Mtuze, *Introduction to Xhosa Culture* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 2004).

[13] The song prefigures later isiXhosa poems. See, for example, Isaac Wauchope Citashe, "Zimkile! mfo wohlanga (Your Cattle are Plundered, Compatriots!)," in Jeff Opland, "The Image of the Book in Xhosa Oral Poetry," *Current Writing* 7.2 (1995): 33, in which

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In opposition to his rival diviner, Nxele (who preached a millenarian message that advocated a complete rejection of Europeans and their customs), Ntsikana taught acceptance and accommodation (Hodgson, *Great Hymn* 3). However, his initial refusal to leave his people and to cast off traditional ways shows that he intended this to happen on terms set by the amaXhosa. What was radical about Ntsikana's theology was the fact that his belief system called for individual commitment, whereas traditionally religion was a communal affair (54). Hodgson makes the significant point that "over the years, Ntsikana's concept of unity has been further extended to embrace all races, and white guests of honour have been regularly invited to attend the annual celebration [of the Manyano lo Buzalwana Bohlanga lwama Xosa—The Union of the Brotherhood of the amaXhosa nation—that lately became known as the St. Ntsikana Memorial Association]." Hodgson quotes the Assistant General Secretary's address at the 1971 Annual Celebration:

> This is a noble occasion for which we hasten to thank the Almighty who has brought us here to-day as members of various denominations, different clans and tribes of Africa. This commemoration belongs not to one single denomination only, but embraces all the people of Africa. We are a Society which seeks to perpetuate the teaching of the prince of peace, the prophet Saint Ntsikana. We preach love, understanding and peaceful co-existence between all the races of this country. (C.B. Dyeza, qtd in *Great Hymn* 57)

This Pan-African vision, presented in the glory days of the apartheid era, includes all races and recognizes that people of European descent are part of this vision and are part of an Africa built on the ideals of the St. Ntsikana Association.[14]

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the author exhorts the amaXhosa to forego physical resistance to colonialism and, instead, adopt the pen as a weapon of resistance. The poem is discussed in greater depth in chapter 4.

[14] Along similar lines, see also President Thabo Mbeki's address to the Ethiopian Episcopal Church Centenary, reproduced at www.info.gov.za/speeches/2000/00011235p1001.htm.

Ntsikana's best-known work was "Ulo Thixo omkhulu" (literally: "You, Great God," but generally known as the "Great Hymn"), which is still often sung at religious services.[15] The syncretic approach taken by Ntsikana in this work carries through into later literature, where, despite being dressed in more contemporary and western terms, the essential purpose is the same: to find synthesis and to explain the encounter[16] with the "other."[17]

The significance of Ntsikana's hymn is not only that it is the first creative attempt by a native speaker of isiXhosa that can be identified positively as the creation of an individual; it also defines a moment of transition into modernity. Ntsikana existed on the cusp of two civilizations, a position in which he found himself constantly attempting to refashion the foreign world view to which he had been exposed in ways that were altogether new and that would exemplify his own description of his conversion as a renewal ("*ndasungulwa*"—the day I was renewed). One of the Lovedale missionaries, John Brownlee, described Ntsikana's hymn as "scriptural clothed in Kafir dress" (qtd in

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[15] The earliest written version of the poem appeared in the Report for the Glasgow Missionary Society for 1823 (Shepherd, *Bantu Literature and Life* [Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1955] 27). Shepherd also offers an alternate version of the poem, published in 1828 by John Phillip, on page 28. In fact, there are several oral versions that are discussed in Hodgson, *Ntsikana's Great Hymn* 1–21.

[16] The word "encounter" is clearly inadequate for describing the events that occur and for developing framework within which to discuss of the cultural work that occurs place in Ntsikana's hymns. "Encounter," defined by the OED as "to meet as adversary, exposure to something, come across by chance, meeting in conflict," is not entirely adequate for describing Ntsikana's interaction with, and response to, a foreign world view. While the second meaning, "to come across by chance" is certainly appropriate in this context, the other two definitions are less felicitous: Ntsikana certainly does not immediately treat the new religion as an adversary, nor does he necessarily consider the relationship to be one of conflict. It is this lack of conflict and the lack of an adversarial animus that makes Mary Louise Pratt's otherwise illuminating terminology, "contact zone" problematic in this context (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* [New York: Routledge, 1992] 4).

[17] Janet Hodgson has done extensive work on the way in which Ntsikana articulates the transition between a traditional amaXhosa world view and a new, Christian, one.

Hodgson, "Genius" 31). Brownlee's observation is not unwarranted, for Ntsikana consciously employs the structure of a traditional praise-poem in praising God and overlays the Christian message with images taken from amaXhosa tradition. In this interplay between traditional and foreign forms of worship that Ntsikana negotiates in "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," *kuhlangene isanga nenkohla* (an intricate question has cropped up), for the song raises questions of identity in ways that were previously unimaginable.

I have intentionally relied on the isiXhosa phrasing here for the sake of its rich and complex semantics. The primary meaning of the phrase, literally transcribed, is that the wonderful and the impossible have joined or collided—and what Ntsikana achieves is both wonderful and seemingly impossible: in his hymn, he finds synthesis between two world views. In both its literal translation and its metaphoric rendition, the expression "*kuhlangene isanga nenkohla*" contains potential for the exploration of South African identity-formation in the nineteenth century. The root verb that has been inflected in "kuhlangene" is *ukuhlangana*, which means to unite, to come together, to join. In its transitive form, *ukuhlanganela*, it means to meet for a purpose; in the causative, *ukuhlanganisa*, it means to assemble, to cause to bring together. Yet *ukuhlangana* also has a secondary meaning: to parry (to join sticks), to ward off or to defend against something. The root of the word, used as a noun, refers to armour (*isihlanangiselo*) or to an instrument for warding off danger (*isihlanganiso*).[18] The multiple possibilities embedded in this single verb and its variant forms encapsulate the way in which Ntsikana negotiates the initial transfer between two knowledge systems in ways that conventional terminology simply cannot. *Ukuhlangana* also captures the complexity of the cultural milieu in a way that Pratt's "contact zone" (*Imperial Eyes* 4) does not.[19] Moreover, this is the word that Ntsikana himself uses in his song to describe what has occurred in bringing together of two world views when he describes God as

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[18] See "ukuHlangana," Alfred Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*.

[19] See n. 16 supra.

"Ulohlanganis' imihlamb' eyalanayo" (He who amalgamates flocks that reject each other—"Ulo Thixo omkhulu" l. 12).[20]

Although *umhlanganisi*[21]—the one who brings together or amalgamates—is used here in reference to God, and Ntsikana could more aptly be described as *umxolelanisi* (peacemaker), what Ntsikana attempts to do in his hymn is more than make peace. In "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," he is also trying to amalgamate two world views, however imperfect his effort may seem in the face of God's abilities. In this sense, Ntsikana, I argue, can also be described as *umhlanganisi*: one who brings together. By using the term in the secular context of Ntsikana's efforts to reconcile two world views, *umhlanganisi* acquires a broader semantic value and now refers not only to the state of perfection that is God, but also to human efforts at striving to reach this state of perfection. In this more secular context, *umhlanganisi* becomes a useful term to describe a person who finds him- or herself trying to bring together two world views, or philosophical systems. Someone who is described as being *umhlanganisi* is a person who consciously works to bring together apparent opposites. Yet Ntsikana does not just bring together or amalgamate these views, he also warns his people of an imminent danger. This aspect of Ntsikana's work is compatible with a reference to him as *umhlanganisi*, for *ukuhlangana*, the root verb, can mean to ward off or to defend.

Traditional Xhosa religion did not concern itself much with the metaphysical, and concentrated more on "guiding people's behaviour in the existing world" (Peires, *The Dead will Arise* 30). After introducing his new God and praising him as one would a traditional chief, Ntsikana contextualises his praises:

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[20] References to the text of "Ulo Thixo omkhulu" are taken from the version reprinted in Janet Hodgson, "The Genius of Ntsikana: Traditional Images and the Process of Change in Early Xhosa Literature," (*Literature and Society in South Africa*. eds. Landeg White and Tim Couzens [Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1984] 30–31).

[21] *Umhlanganisi* is the noun from which "ulohlanganisi," the form used by Ntsikana, is derived.

Lathetha ixilongo lisibizile.
Ulongqin' izingela imiphefumlo.
Ulohlanganis' imihlamb' eyalanayo.
Ulomkhokeli wasikhokela thina.

(ll. 11–14, qtd in Hodgson "Genius" 30–1)

[The trumpet sounded, it has called us.
As for his chase, He hunteth for souls.
He, Who amalgamates flocks rejecting each other.
He, the Leader, Who has led us.]

(John Knox Bokwe, *Ntsikana: The Story of an African Convert* 62)[22]

The traditional ox-horn, *ixilongo*, was used as a signal trumpet by the amaXhosa to call the people to war or to go on a hunt ("Genius" 35). Ntsikana was an astute political observer, and the military metaphors are not incidental. Jeff Peires notes that the amaXhosa were comprised of many different tribes that had formed a political union, either as a conscious choice, or as the result of defeat in battle. When the amaXhosa conquered other nations (or were themselves conquered), they accepted as part of their fate the fact that they would be absorbed into the new culture, and that their own traditions would likewise become part of the new culture that arose. What distinguished the white settlers in a way that remained inexplicable to the amaXhosa, was that once they had conquered the amaXhosa, they consciously drove them away again, making every effort to keep them separate (*The House of Phalo* 66). This was something entirely new and unfathomable to the amaXhosa. While Hodgson notes that *imiphefumlo* generally means "breath" and that Ntsikana's use of the word in a more spiritual sense of "soul" is entirely new, the reference to the *ixilongo* refers to a call for action, not just in a spiritual sense, but also in the more pragmatic sense of resisting the colonial attempts to create a buffer zone in the area inhabited by his people. Instead, Ntsikana suggests, these "flocks rejecting each other" should work together towards finding a feasible solution.

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[22] Trans. by John Knox Bokwe. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

The amaXhosa traditionally kept different kinds of animals apart (Hodgson, "Genius" 35); Ntsikana's suggestion that God "amalgamates"[23] these flocks is therefore a radical departure from the traditional world view.[24] The reference to "flocks" is ambiguous, and could refer to the different amaXhosa clans as much as it could refer to the European settlers who had recently established a more permanent presence among the amaXhosa. While recognizing the differences between them, Ntsikana endows these flocks with a sense of volition, thus suggesting that they are separated by choice rather than by the dictates of traditional animal husbandry. Ntsikana's integrative sense of identity is clear from the praise-names he gives to God: other than the traditional Xhosa nomenclature for the godhead, *uMenzi* (Creator or Worker), *uHlanga* (Source from whence all people came), and *inkosi yezulu* (God of the Sky), he also refers to God as *uThixo*, a name taken over from the conquered Khoi tribes, many of whom had become part of the amaGunuqwebhe clan. However, he also creates a new praise name: *Udalubom*—from *uMdali* (Creator) and *ubomi*, life or vigour (33). As the Creator of Life, this new God is a God of all people; thus Ntsikana's confusion surrounding the insistence on the part of the missionaries and the colonial government on keeping the followers of the one God separate.

If we accept that Ntsikana endows his flocks with a sense of volition (also a new concept among the amaXhosa, who believed to a large extent in predestination), then the hymn offers an imaginative alternative to the fighting that characterized the land. Ntsikana appears to have recognized that separating the people of emaXhoseni by means of buffer zones was as impossible as it was impractical. If this new God was indeed a God of all people, he seems to ask, then why separate people?

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[23] This is Bokwe's English rendition of the original "*ulohlanganis'*; the root verb is *ukuhlangana*. The translation does not do justice to the complexity of Ntsikana's word-choice.

[24] See, by comparison, the apostle Peter's vision in Acts 10, where he is commanded to eat from a sheet that contains both clean and unclean animals. When he refuses to do so, he is rebuked not to "consider anything unclean that God has declared clean."

Indeed, *kuhlangene isanga nenkohla*. For Ntsikana, the wonderful and the impossible collided and created a new and potentially powerful vision for his people. Yet the new construct comes into being on Ntsikana's terms, not those of the colonizer (although admittedly, the relations of power were to shift radically in the course of the nineteenth century). In his hymn of praise, Ntsikana set the tone for future interrogations of identity. His hymn certainly had an influence on the literature that was (and still is) produced in South Africa. What he achieved, ultimately, was *ukuhlangana*: he not only brought together divergent ideas in a "syncretic" way, he also used the moment to resist the assumed authority of the colonial government and/or missionaries and placed Xhosa tradition at the centre of a revised world view.[25]

Even though Ntsikana found peace through *ukuhlangana*, it was a double-edged sword. For all the good embodied in Ntsikana's call for an integration of traditions, *ukuhlangana* also harboured the unforeseen danger that subsequent writers might reject the old ways without due consideration, thus in effect also denying the amaXhosa a rooted sense of identity. Ntsikana already hints at a dislodged sense of identity that becomes central not only to the amaXhosa, but to other sections of the South African community at the time. The Dutch farmers in the region had for a long time lived beyond the control of government authority and were constantly fighting and negotiating equitable access to the land with the amaXhosa. Many of them, like Coenraad de Buys, had in fact chosen to live among the amaXhosa, and, to a large extent, had adopted their lifestyle. This was a workable compromise that not only benefited the amaXhosa, who could use Buys to gain access to European armaments, but also protected Buys's own economic interests.

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[25] What is happening in South Africa now, in such events as the recent decision by the Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) to grant full autonomy to the Ethiopian Episcopal Church (EEC), appears to be a return to an acceptance of the integrative approach first suggested by Ntsikana. It is a recognition of the centrality of African tradition within the church and is a means of re-igniting a sense of pride in African custom and tradition. See Mtuze, *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality*, chapter 4, for a fuller discussion of the EEC and its relationship with traditional spirituality.

The increased presence of missionaries and settlers along the borders of emaXhoseni inevitably led to an increase in trade. Whereas the Dutch government had frowned upon trade among the people of the Frontier, the British realized that indigenous trade was essential to the viability of the colony. As part of this effort to promote trade in the region, they encouraged settlement, and in 1820 a group of one thousand British settlers arrived at Algoa Bay, from where they departed for their allotted land in the Zuurveld area. The addition of a third party that required land in an already unstable region invited trouble and meant that everybody had, yet again, to renegotiate the allegiances and equilibrium that had developed over time. As permanent settlements developed, more people moved to the area. Among them was a young Scotsman, Andrew Geddes Bain. Born in Thurso, Scotland in 1797, he arrived at the Cape at the age of nineteen. Settling initially in the district of Graaff-Reinet, an outpost that was infamously mistrusting of (British and Dutch colonial) authority,[26] Bain had a varied life, ranging from being a trader to being, respectively, soldier, diarist, playwright, road-builder and amateur archaeologist. Despite his notable contributions in all these fields, he is today largely remembered for producing one of the first creative works to use Afrikaans: "Kaatje Kekkelbek; or Life among the Hottentots," a song that was performed at Grahamstown in 1838 and subsequently published in *Sam Sly's African Journal* in 1846.

In 1835, Bain was appointed as Captain of the Beaufort troops (a Khoi detachment) and was stationed at Fort Thompson along the banks of the Tyumie River. From the start, Bain had to negotiate with the local chief, Tyali. Upon his arrival, Bain was allotted a piece of land measuring 3,000 morgen, on which he established a homestead and started laying out a farming enterprise alongside the military fort. Tyali soon observed the furrows that Bain used to channel water to his fields and asked Bain to help him do the same on his lands. He also asked Bain to train some of his oxen so that he could use them on his lands. While Bain was training the oxen, the governor, Andries Stöckenstom, decided that the no-man's land rightfully belonged to the amaXhosa and that all settlers had to withdraw from the area. Bain records the circumstances surrounding his forced departure from the farm in his diary:

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[26] The remote town had been the site of a rebellion in 1795, during which a group of cantankerous Boer farmers had declared the area an independent republic.

> I still urged Chief Tyali to commence his watercourse, telling him that his oxen were trained and fit for ploughing, when he made this memorable reply: "Tyali has altered his mind since he got his land back again. Tyali is a Kafir, a son of Gachabie [Rharhabe], and he is not going to spoil his oxen with ploughing while he has plenty of wives to till the soil for him." Tyali now addressed me: "You must pay me a cow for having had my oxen for so long in your plough." This rather surprised me but, finding remonstrance vain, I told him I could not spare a cow but would give him the value in money. "No," said he, "I don't want a cow that I can put in my pocket but one that can walk on its legs." To make a long story short I was obliged to pay him a cow for having trained his oxen!
>
> (Bain, *Journals* 188–89)

Bain's description of Tyali in this passage reflects the tone of much of the writing that emanated from the region at the time. Bert Paasman notes that in many historical descriptions of trading with Africans, the people of the continent were depicted as sly and thieving:

> Ze kunnen weliswaar niet lezen en schrijven, maar in rekenen en stelen zijn se goed, aldus een van de beschrijvers, gemakshalve voorbijgaand aan het feit dat ook de blanken handelaren niet vies waren van dubieuze, maar winsgevende praktyken.... Afrikanen bleken ook dikwijls heel schrander en konden snel iets leren, vooral door blanken te imiteren.
>
> [They might well be unable to read and write, but when it came to counting and stealing, they were competent, according to one observer, who comfortably glossed over the fact that white traders themselves did not shy away from dubious yet profitable practices.... Africans were also often fairly clever and could learn things rapidly, especially by imitating whites.]
>
> ("Mens of Dier?" 94)

Tyali possesses an innately sly intellect that is coupled with a stubborn refusal to accept western practices, for not only does he refuse to adopt "modern" farming practices, he also rejects complicity in spreading the use of western currency that was hastening the erosion of traditional amaXhosa culture. He is thus, according to Bain, smart enough to cheat, but not smart enough to imitate the colonizer.

Yet Tyali, like Ntsikana, does not mimic or imitate the colonizer as a consequence of his lack of ability, as Bain seems to infer in this passage. On the contrary, despite (or after) displaying interest in the ways of the colonizer, he consciously rejects what Bain, as an emblem of colonial order, has to offer. In his diary entry, Bain tries to dismiss Tyali's response as theft and in so doing re-establish his own wavering sense of authority and control—for Tyali has not mimicked, but has consciously warded off the attempted intrusion of western practices. Having gotten his land back, and thus finding himself once more in control of an important commodity, Tyali resists the colonizer and refuses to acknowledge the authority of either Bain or the government he represents in the region.

Just as Ntsikana refused to move to the mission at Tyumie since he believed that such an action could lead to the destruction of the centrality of Xhosa culture and result in mere mimicry of the colonizer's ways, so Tyali resists the colonial influence and will not become complicit in its machinations.[27] He is not willing to sacrifice his own culture,

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[27] It is important to note, though, that on his deathbed Ntsikana did instruct his followers to enter the mission. However, he allegedly sent them on their way with the strict exhortation that they remain "njenge mbumba yamanyama." Janet Hodgson writes about the phrase:

> This has been variously translated as "the particles of a ball of cement" or "a gumball". The symbolism is correct but in fact this term is used to denote the scrapings from the inside of an animal skin which is being prepared for use as a cloak. The moistened flesh of the skin is scraped with axes until the hair roots show, and, when finished, the scrapings are rolled together into a ball which sticks together in an unbreakable mass. ("The Genius of Ntsikana: Traditional Images and the Process of Change in Early Xhosa Literature," *Literature and Society in South Africa*, ed. Landeg White and Tim Couzens [Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1984] 35)

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but is willing to explore the usefulness of Bain's cultural practices on his own terms. The *modus operandi* is, once more, *ukuhlangana*. Tyali parries with Bain: he uses Bain's own reasoning against him and protects himself from the attempted intrusion by refusing to adhere to what Bain understands to be the accepted terms of engagement—thus Bain's indignation at being outwitted.

Bain glosses over his own tenuous occupation of the land and presents himself as the victim in this exchange—not only is he short-changed by Tyali, but the government also decides to evacuate him from the area. The incident reveals the delicate balance that existed in emaXhoseni; despite the wry, humorous dismissal of the event, Bain's predicament clearly illustrates the failure of the colonial imagination. Bain settles in the contested area as a designate of the colonial government and is charged not only with keeping the peace, but also with advancing western practices. He embarks on a farming practice that fails (we are led to believe) because of the deceitfulness of the native. In a similar way, his effort at philanthropy fails when Tyali does not (at least on the surface) conform to the expectations of western behaviour. However, Tyali appears to have internalized the settler discourse on property, and his rejection of western practices and trading conventions suggests what Jeff Peires calls inverted mimicry of the coloniser's attitude to the vanquished (*House of Phalo* 66). Although Bain is the loser on more than one level in this interchange, he gets his vengeance by presenting the reader with an assumed moral superiority that is based on his adherence to western ethical codes. Yet it is only on paper that Bain can begin to assert his assumed sense of superiority, and then it is an authority that is built on the false premise that Tyali has attempted to mimic and has failed, since, as I have pointed out, Tyali does *not* attempt to

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Ntsikana's instruction to his followers to enter the mission was pragmatic. EmaXhoseni was in the throes of war and his small band of followers, who advocated peaceful co-existence, had a better chance of survival within the protected confines of the mission station. However much his injunction to remain "njenge mbumba yamanyama" called for his followers to remain strong in their faith, it also suggests Ntsikana's trepidation about their future in a changing political climate.

mimic but internalizes and uses the very strategies employed by the colonizer against him.

The loss of his land and the (at least temporarily) successful resistance he encountered at the hands of Tyali obviously left Bain embittered, for he again addressed these issues in his satiric song, "Kaatje Kekkelbek; or Life Among the Hottentots." The song is one of the earliest extant creative works that uses Afrikaans, the language spoken by the title character as well as by the Boers mentioned in the poem. At the time, Afrikaans was a curious construct: The colonists from the Netherlands were a socially diverse group, bringing with them a range of dialects and classes. At the Cape, these people were often forced to mix socially with other colonists from France and Germany. Through their slaves, they also came into contact with languages such as Malay and Portuguese Creole, while their dealings in the interior brought them into contact with the languages of the various Bushman groups and the southern Nguni.[28] The everyday language of the people was therefore shaped by many cultures and grammars, all smoothed over with a solid dollop of English after the British took possession of the

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[28] The use of "Bushmen" vs. "San" is fraught with controversy. Duncan Brown outlines current thinking on the subject:

> There is much debate about the ethnographic terms "Bushmen" and "San". Until fairly recently, the term "San" was perceived to be less derogatory, and thus gained currency in anthropological and sociological studies. Recent research has indicated, however, that "San" was in fact an insulting term for the Bushmen used by the Khoi. While I am aware of its inadequacies (not least its gender bias), I use the Afrikaans term "Bushmen" ... (*Voicing the Text: South African Oral Poetry and Performance* [Cape Town: Oxford, 1998] 30, n.1).

Following Brown, and using the same caveats as he does, I use the terms "Bushman" or "Bushmen." See also John Wright, "Sonqua, Bosjemans, Bushmen, abaThwa: Comments and Queries on Pre-modern Identification," *South African Historical Journal / Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal* 35 (1996): 16–29; and Antjie Krog's introduction to *The Stars Say "Tsau": /Xam Poetry of Diä!kwain, Kweiten-ta-//ken, /A!kúnta, /Han≠kass'o and //Kabbo* (Cape Town: Kwela, 2004).

Cape in 1806.[29] Afrikaans, or "Hotnotstaal" or "Kombuiskaffir" (Kitchen Kaffir) as it was also called, would have been the language used by both Kaatje Kekkelbek and by the Boer characters mentioned in the poem.

"Kaatje Kekkelbek" is the story of a noisy, banal Bushman temptress who embodies all that the settler finds abhorrent in the indigene. Although Kaatje is the speaker in the poem, she remains, through her self-parodying demeanour, a voiceless figure who is ridiculed as being a lazy, drunken thief who uses whatever natural intelligence she might possess only to devise further mischief:

> My name is Kaatje Kekkelbek,
> I come from Katrivier,
> Daar is van water geen gebrek, [Of water there is no lack]
> But scarce of wine and beer.
> Myn A, B, C, at Philips school [My ABC at Philips school]
> I learnt a kleine beetje,
> But left it just as great a fool
> As gekke Tante Mietje. ... [As crazy Aunt Mietje]
>
> "Kaatje Kekkelbek" 67

The Kat River valley lay at the heart of the contested no-man's land of the Eastern Frontier, where Bain had farmed a few years earlier. It was also home to John Phillip's school for the scattered and abused Hottentot and Bushman people who still inhabited the area. As was the case with Van der Kemp's mission at Bethelsdorp, the settlers resented the school, which, they felt, deprived them of a legitimate source of free labour. Initially, Bain draws the reader's attention to the fertility of the area through the reference to the fact that there is plenty of water; however, the true intent of Bain's poem surfaces when he focuses on Kaatje's primary vice, alcohol. Kaatje is soon made into an unfit heir to this earthly paradise in which "Daar is van water geen gebrek" (There is no shortage of water).

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[29] This passage draws on Isabel Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnicity, 1902–1924," *Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longmans, 1987) 95–123, as well as on the sources she cites, including J. Combrink, "Afrikaans: its origins and development," *Language and Communication Studies in South Africa*, ed. L.W. Lanham and K.P. Prinsloo (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1978) 69–95.

Where Tyali's exposure to more "advanced" farming practices had led to the exploitation of the settler farmer, thus revealing the danger inherent in (partially) educating the native, Bain, through his depiction of Kaatje Kekkelbek, raises the question of whether the native in fact desires to be educated in the first instance. When Kaatje attempts her ABCs, she gets no further than "B" before deciding that it "Ain't half so good as brandewyn." Bain's implication that the native does not desire education stands in stark contrast to William Wellington Gqoba's "Inxoxo enkhulu ngemfundo" (Great Discussion on Education—1884), a lengthy isiXhosa poem in which Gqoba engages in a dialogue about the respective merits of western education and traditional knowledge.[30] Kaatje's failure to be civilised by the educational experience offered at John Phillip's school is compared to another person with a similar perceived lack of intelligence: the Afrikaner Boer. Kaatje leaves the school "just as great a fool / As gekke Tante Mietje." If anything, the Boer is regarded as being even less capable of intellectual thought than Kaatje:

> Regt! se een Boer is een moer slimme ding! Hy was eens net so stom als de Setlaars en Christemens, *maar Hot'nots en Kaffers het hom slim gemaakt*! Ja! rasnawel, ons het die dag so lekker sit en karnaatjes eet, dat de vet so langs de bek afloop—maar hier kom de Boer by ons uit met syn overgehaalde haan en sleep ons heele spul na de tronk. Maar nou trek hy weg, over Grootrivier, die moervreter zeg dat hy niet meer kan klaarkom met de Engelse Gorment!
>
> [Truly! The Boer is a damn clever thing! He was once as stupid as the Settlers and Christians, but the Hottentots and Kaffirs made him clever! Yes! So there we were one day, eating carbonaatjies until the fat dripped from our cheeks—but then out came the Boer with a cocked rifle and dragged us all to jail. But now he treks away, across

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[30] "Inxoxo enkhulu ngemfundo" is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

> the Grootrivier! The motherfucker says he can no longer get along
> with the British Gov'ment!]

"Kaatje Kekkelbek" 68

Bain's image of the Boers, or more specifically, the Frontier farmer, is telling. These farmers have spent so long in the company of the natives that they themselves are identified as being the Other. They have, in the eyes of the English settler, "gone native," and can no longer stand as representatives of the finer European civilization. This alignment of Boer and autochthonous identities reflects an interesting development in the way the (conservative) English settler viewed his position on the continent. Despite their differences, both the Boer and the Hottentots have descended into barbarism, whereas the Englishman has remained a pillar of civilization despite the frontier contact.

Ultimately, European voyeurism triumphs over the inhabitants of Africa. Although he disguises his intentions under the veil of yet another attack on the liberal philosophies espoused by Phillip and Read, Bain's gaze is focused luridly on Kaatje's body, and through her, he speaks his own Eurocentric philosophy:

> Oom Andries Stoffels in England told[31]
> (Fine compliments he paid us),
> Dat Engelse dame, was juist de same
> As ons *sweet* Hot'not *ladies*.
> When drest up in myn voersits pak   [Sunday Best]
> What hearts will then be undone,
> Should I but show my *face* or *back*
> (*Kaatje here turns around*)
> Among the Beaux of London.

"Kaatje Kekkelbek" 69

The use of "Oom" (uncle) in front of Andries Stoffels's name is clearly sarcastic, as it affords Andries Stoffels a measure of respect that is otherwise absent from the rest of the song.[32] In both his diary and in "Kaatje Kekkelbek," Bain rejects any possibility of a hybrid identity developing. He focuses his gaze completely on the native and by reducing Kaatje to little more than an object of desire, he continues to assert his secure Eurocentric vision. As Helize van Vuuren points out, Kaatje Kekkelbek's real-life counterfoil might be Saartje Baartman, the so-called "Hottentot Venus" whose private parts remained in the Musée de l'Homme until very recently ("Andrew Geddes Bain"). Baartman was the victim of deliberate exploitation under false pretences; in short, she was tricked out of her country, both physically and metaphorically, to satisfy European delight at viewing the other.[33] Although Bain may well have balked at the thought of his

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[31] John Phillip and John Read sent Andreas Stoffels, a Bushman, and Jan Tzatzu (Dyani Tzatzu), an umXhosa chief, to England to petition the Aborigines Committee about the suppression of the native races in South Africa.

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[32] Guy Butler suggests that "Although oom is the ordinary Afrikaans word for uncle, there really no English equivalent for its use as a familiar yet respectful title for any older man" (qtd in "Oom Gert vertel," *Afrikaans Poems with English Translations*, ed. A.P. Grove and C.J.D. Harvey [Cape Town: OUP, 1963] 33).

[33] Sander L. Gilman pays particular attention to the stereotype of the Hottentot in his essay, "The Hottentot and the Prostitute: Toward and Iconography of Female Sexuality" (published in *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985], 72–108). In this essay, in which Gilman's ultimate intention is to offer a contextualized reading of Edouard Manet's painting, *Nana* (1877), he first shows how, in the nineteenth century, the Hottentot (or black) woman came to represent the antithesis of classical beauty and intelligence. He then establishes a parallel between the Hottentot and the prostitute, who carries in her body similar traits of disease and degeneracy before proceeding with his reading of the painting. *Nana*, in Gilman's reading, draws on all the prevailing stereotypes of degeneracy and deviance associated with blacks and prostitutes.

Gilman shows how it is through her genitalia and, ultimately, her buttocks, that the Hottentot female comes to be regarded as primitive and degenerate, the antithesis of European conceptions of female beauty. In "Kaatje Kekkelbek," Bain draws on many of these stereotypes of the Hottentot female: Many prostitutes, according to nineteenth-century views, were the children of alcoholics, and Kaatje's main vice, alcohol, is therefore a sign of similar degeneracy; her inability to learn (or her perceived lack of desire to do so) and her habitual criminal behaviour can be connected to the perceived lack of intelligence among prostitutes and the links drawn in the late nineteenth century by Dr. Pauline Tarnowsky between prostitution, insanity and criminality (Gilman 95–96). This link with insanity is given credence in "Kaatje Kekkelbek" through the view that Kaatje's limited exposure to education at Phillips's school left her "just as great a fool / As gekke Tant Mietje." Following Gilman's reasoning here, it would be interesting to explore in greater detail the representations of Afrikaner women in early South

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literary endeavours being appropriated by the Afrikaners he derides in the poem, it is interesting to note that his propensity to spirit away the native or to reduce her to little more than a body, a space for the coloniser to occupy, is something that reasserts itself again in the Afrikaans fiction in the period before the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910.[34]

By reducing Kaatje Kekkelbek to little more than a body, Bain is able to render her voiceless and unable to formulate any sense of identity beyond that which he, as her creator, imposes on her. Unlike Tyali, therefore, she cannot answer back and show that she is capable of negotiating for herself a space between cultures. Instead, Bain is able to present to the reader a figure who has been unsuccessful at *ukuhlangana* and who is an unsuccessful *umhlanganisi*. Her inability to negotiate the space between two worlds, by implication, renders her unworthy of ownership of the land and in this way Bain is able, at least on paper, to vindicate the loss of his land and his cow at the hands of Tyali and to inscribe for the English settler a right to ownership of the land. Moreover, by aligning Kaatje Kekkelbek with the Boers earlier in the poem, Bain is able to comment also on the Boers' inability to negotiate for themselves a space in/on the land. Just as Kaatje is unsuccessful at negotiating her environment, so the Boers' decision to move out of the colonial space indicates *their* inability to be the heirs of the land.

On the surface, there are obvious parallels between the development of Afrikaans literature and Afrikaner Nationalism on the one hand, and African literature and African Nationalism on the other. However, drawing similar parallels between English (proto)South African identity and the concept of political liberalism is more

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African writing. See here, for example, John Barrow's view of the Boer farmers as indistinguishable from the Hottentots among whom they live.

Robert Young explores further the metropolitan fascination with the female body in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[34] See S.J. du Toit, *Di koningin fan Skeba; of Salamo syn oue goudfelde in Sambesia* (Kaapstad: Africana Uitgewers, 1998) and Adriaan Francken, *Susanna Reyniers: 'n Blijspel* (Amsterdam and Pretoria: J.H. de Bussy, 1908).

challenging, for, in the context of the nineteenth century, the epithet "liberal" has come to refer to almost any missionary enterprise. While "Kaatje Kekkelbek" reflects the mindset of the more conservative English settler, the work of Thomas Pringle stands as a prime example of the intellectual philanthropist, imbued with the idealism of an Enlightenment philosophy, conflicting with his alter ego in the shape of a threatened frontier farmer. Pringle's treatment of the autochtnous people (in this case, specifically the Bushman) is more complex than Bain's, and reflects his torn sensibility as he struggles to reconcile his own desire to belong and prosper in the colony with the knowledge that the colonizers took the land from its rightful owners.

Both Afrikaans and Xhosa written literature seemed literally to grow out of the continent, and were shaped by it from the moments of their inception; however, English writers in South Africa had a long tradition of writing to fall back on, and as a result much of the proto-English literature produced in South Africa was that of visitation, of Europeans observing the continent and imbuing it with their own sensibilities (Van Wyk Smith, *Grounds of Contest* 3). The most significant, and perhaps even canonized, examples from this era are the letters of Lady Anne Barnard (1803; 1972) and Sir John Barrow's travelogue, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (1801; 1804). Mary Louise Pratt exposes Barrow's voyeuristic gaze for what it is: an attempt to write the native out of existence and to take possession of the land ("Scratches on the Face of the Country"). In his *Account*, Barrow reproduced a lasting image of the Afrikaner Boers, or, as he called them, "African peasants":

> Unwilling to work, and unable to think, with a mind disengaged from every sort of care and reflexion, indulging to excess in the gratification of every sensual appetite, the African peasant grows to an unwieldy size, and is carried off the stage by the first inflammatory disease that attacks him. (qtd in Smith, *Grounds of Contest* 4)

Barrow's description (ironically) reminds one of the descriptions of black Africans in later colonial writings. He also comments on the fact that many of the Boer farmers lived "entirely in the society of Hottentots." Barrow projects an image of degenerate idleness onto the Boer—a trait matched only by the laziness of the Hottentots emphasised by Bain in "Kaatje Kekkelbek."

It is within this complex milieu that Thomas Pringle produces what is widely acclaimed to be the first truly "South African" poetry. Pringle was already an established poet by the time he arrived in South Africa in 1820 as the leader of a group of British settlers. His work constitutes a minor contribution to Romantic poetry and he is remembered chiefly for his *African Sketches* (1834) and for his *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (1835). Although Pringle was given a farm upon his arrival, he was ill suited to the occupation. Once his brother had arrived from England, Pringle left the farm for Cape Town in 1825, where he and Abraham Faure, a Dutch minister of religion, started a publication called the *South African Journal*. However, the publication was closed down after an article dealing with the plight of the settler farmers was published in the first issue and raised the ire of the Colonial Governor. This became the start of a five-year-long battle to secure the freedom of the press in South Africa. That same year Pringle became, with John Farbairn, an editor of the newly established *South African Commercial Advertiser*. After the *Commercial Advertiser's* type was seized and the printer, George Greig, was deported and Thomas Pringle returned to farming. However, financial difficulties forced him to return to England, where he worked tirelessly for the abolition of slavery, which was enacted in the British Parliament mere months before his death from tuberculosis.[35]

In contrast to Bain's depiction of the inherently lazy, thieving Kaatje Kekkelbek, Pringle unsettles this stereotype in his depiction of the disembarkation from the ships that brought the colonists to South Africa. The settlers display "the boisterous hilarity of people who felt their feet touch firm ground for the first time after a wearisome voyage" (9–10), and the beach is a bustle of activity:

> Bands of men and women were walking up and down, conversing and laughing; their children gamboling around them, and raising ever

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[35] Fairbairn subsequently resumed publication of the *Commercial Advertiser*, and when it was again banned in 1827, he went to London to seek redress. In 1828, he was allowed to resume publication and a year later the Press was freed from the control of the Governor.

> and anon their shrill voices in exclamations of pleasure and surprise.... Tall Dutch-African boors, with broad-rimmed hats, and huge tobacco pipes in their mouths, were bawling in Colonial-Dutch. Whips were smacking, bullocks bellowing, wagons creaking; and the half-naked Hottentots, who led the long teams of draught oxen, were running, and halooing [sic], and waving their long swanky arms in front of their horned followers, like so many mad dervishes.
>
> (*Narrative* 10)

Amidst the turmoil of the landing, the local people are steadily going about their work: while the English children "gambol" on the beach, the "Dutch-African boors" and the "half-naked Hottentots" drive the oxen. Their "bawling" and "halooing" mingles with the bellowing of the oxen, and their individual activity becomes a carefully orchestrated unit that is designed to assist the newly-arrived British settlers. Pringle's initial view of the Boer and the Hottentot is that they form an indispensable unit at the service of the English settler. However, unlike Barrow, Pringle does not initially depict them as lazy, for the team he observes is hard at work.

Although Pringle points to the manner of their dress as an obvious difference between the Boers and the Hottentots, the two groups are bound together through their relationship to the oxen. It is, ultimately, through oxen and the landscape that Pringle defines the people of Africa.[36] In many of his poems and short stories, Pringle emphasises the cruel physicality of the power relationship that exists between the Hottentots and the Boers through the image of the whip. Shortly after his arrival, Pringle departed for Bethelsdorp, Van der Kemp's mission station, where Hottentot converts had gathered for protection from the frontier farmers. While the two men were visiting, a colonial guard arrived with a Xhosa woman who had been captured after she had crossed the line of separation between the Colony and emaXhoseni. Pringle is struck by the woman's grace and poise throughout her interview with van der Kemp (15–16). Afterwards, he writes,

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[36] The link between land and cattle resurface several times as an important trope in South African writing. See the discussion of Nongqawuse in Chapter 7.

> For my own part I was not a little struck by the scene, and could not help beginning to suspect that my European countrymen, who thus made captives of harmless women and children, were in reality greater barbarians than the savage native of Caffraria.
>
> (16)

From the start of his sojourn in South Africa, Pringle confronts the basic tenet espoused by Montesquieu, that eventually the slave-owner is debased through the institution of slavery as much as the slave is (qtd in Paasman, "Mens of Dier?" 94). He is torn between his own sense of national pride and his recognition of the injustice that is being performed before his eyes. His immediate concern is therefore for his own complicity in this act of violence against a fellow human being. Yet, as Mark Sanders points out with regard to apartheid in *Complicities*, this very acknowledgement of complicity connects Pringle to Africa and allows him to articulate "not simply a position in support of, or in opposition to, a set of policies, but, more or less explicitly, the affirmation or denial of a basic human foldedness" (14–15).

The image of the distant Hottentot engaged in his labours develops as time progresses. On the way to visit the mission at Bethelsdorp, Pringle was accompanied by a young guide (*Narrative* 13). Initially, in "Afar in the Desert," this Hottentot guide is depicted as a silent companion who attaches himself to the landscape the poet is trying to describe and fathom. Throughout the poem, Pringle remains aware that he is in fact intruding on a space where the authority of his own presence is dubious:

> Afar in the desert I love to ride,
> with the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
> Away, away in the wilderness vast,
> Where the White Man's foot hath never passed,
> And the Quivered Coranna or Bechuan
> Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan:
> A region of emptiness, howling and drear
> Which Man hath abandoned from famine and fear.
>
> (*African Poems* 9)

Pringle glosses over the precariousness of his own position as he attempts to justify the European possession of the land by calling this a region of emptiness that even the native people have "rarely crossed." The myth of *terra nullius* is reinscribed in order to satisfy his ambivalent mind. The poet likens his journey in the desert to that of a pilgrim as he turns from a contemplation of the land itself to a metaphysical exploration of man's existence. In the end, he concludes, "Man is distant, but God is near!" Having virtually emptied the landscape of people, and still finding his presence in it disturbing, Pringle turns to the one constant that remains in his life: God. When his own sensibilities fail, and he cannot fathom his surroundings, he seeks a metaphysical explanation.

Seeking recourse to God in a moment of crisis is one way of dealing with being in the midst of an uncertain social and political milieu. In an attempt to help his students account for the increased interest in traditional religions in the Western Cape during the 1980s, J.S. Cumpsty developed a model of social change based in religious change and a general sense of belonging. Cumpsty noted that there must be "a fit in the long run between man's understanding of the nature of ultimate reality and his socio-cultural experience, or in the short run between his understanding of the nature of ultimate reality and his tradition or he will lose his sense of belonging" ("A Model of Religious Change in Socio-Cultural Disturbance" 61). If this "fit" or balance is disturbed, people begin to look outside the confines of their own socio-cultural experience for alternatives that will restore their sense of belonging. Once the disturbance reaches significant proportions,

> Religious beliefs and practices no longer gain their authority from a plausibility structure within the socio-cultural experience but from their greater success in creating the required sense of belonging, which they do precisely because they are independent of the chaotic or unacceptable socio-cultural experience. (66)

At this point, there is often a move to embrace the cultural practice of the tradition that caused the disturbance (67). Once a semblance of socio-cultural order has been re-established, the society again becomes static and thorough integration of the newly-acquired cultural and religious practices occurs. Thus, a new vocabulary might develop that derives its meaning from the new socio-cultural experience (69), or new meanings may be incorporated that come from recaptured socio-cultural experience. If there is not a wholesale conversion to the new value set in the society, a number of changes nonetheless remain observable: old words, for instance, may take on new meaning from either the old or the new socio-cultural experience, or regain their original importance within the society.

In "Afar in the Desert," Pringle, like Ntsikana, turns to the presence of an omnipresent godhead as he tries to comprehend the impact of a world that is completely new and strange to him. Within the framework provided by Cumpsty, the most significant difference between Pringle and Ntsikana lies in the fact that while Ntsikana's social order is so disturbed that his trusted sources of solace no longer suffice, and he is therefore compelled to seek answers in a new religious foundation, Pringle's sense of belonging within a cultural framework, as well as the sense of domination and control over his surroundings, is still strong enough that he does not need to seek alternative viewpoints.

While Pringle struggles to define the terms of belonging in a new country, he displays an unusual understanding of and sympathy for the plight of the autochthonous people, exemplified through his depiction of the Hottentot. In "Song of the Wild Bushman," the defiant speaker says:

> Thus I am lord of the Desert Land,
> And I will not leave my bounds,
> To crouch beneath a Christian's hand,
> And kennel with his hound.
>
> (*African Sketches* 11–12)

The silent "Bush-Boy" and the "Quivered Coranna" of "Afar in the Desert" now speak (albeit in the voice of an English Enlightenment sensibility) in defiance of the colonizer and refuse to be subjected. Pringle appears to be aware of the limitations of his own vocabulary to express this resistance to colonial intrusion and he therefore relies on the only philosophical frame of reference he knows and understands to articulate it. For him, this realization comes as an affirmation of what Mark Sanders would call a universal "foldedness" (*Complicities* 9). And yet, in endowing these characters with a voice of defiance, Pringle reveals his own struggle to find a synthesis between these two worlds, thus becoming, in some respects, *umhlanganisi* himself.

The vacillating consciousness we see in Pringle's poetry is carried through into his short fiction. "Pangola—An African Tale" is perhaps the story in which he identifies most with the native's plight, and yet the story also best reflects the European sensibility at work. Pangola is a Bushman who deserts his master's farm after being severely beaten. He joins a group of bandits and ends up terrorizing the farmers in the area. When confronted by his former master, Diederik Kruger, Pangola declares his unwillingness to accept forgiveness:

> "Nay, myn baas!" replied the Bushman, "the past can never be forgotten. That day, when I lay prostrate under the agter-os-sjambok—you and your kinsman Bronkhorst may forget it, but I, never. Never more shall I cringe under the white man's lash; never more eat the bread he offers, embittered by his contempt. Hunger, thirst, nakedness, I can bear as my fathers have borne. I can live like the wild hound of the desert; but not like the household dog of your kraals, to be fed, and scorned, and fettered, and beaten at your pleasure. Your commandos have indeed dispersed my tribe and destroyed my kindred; but the wilderness and its wild freedom are still my heritage, and I will never yield them again but with my life.
>
> (*African Sketches* 161)

Central to this passage is the image of the sjambok, the bullwhip, which echoes from Pringle's first encounter with the African continent. The relationship between the presence of the whip and the condition of slavery, merely suggested in the initial passage, has now become evident. For Pangola, the path to recognition of his humanity lies in defiance, and in escape from his condition of enslavement.

Helize van Vuuren correctly points out that in all likelihood, Pringle wrote this story after he had returned to England ("Thomas Pringle"), and it is the voice of Thomas Pringle, abolitionist, that surfaces in this story. In England, where he no longer had to face the tribulations of a frontier farmer, he was free to philosophize about the condition of the colonized people and express his own anguish and guilt over his complicity in the institution of slavery through an emphasis on the physical pain of the native.[37]

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[37] Rather than focus explicitly on the beating itself, as Fredrick Douglass does in his own *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, ed. David W. Blight (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1993), Pringle focuses instead on the healing that Pangola's wife initiates after seeing "His back and limbs…miserably mangled and streaming with blood" (*African Sketches* [London: Edward Moxon]160). As Deborah McDowell observes when discussing the use of the female body as a

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The questions of guilt, complicity and opposition raised in Pringle's work reveal the philanthropic European intellectual wrestling with the reality of the threatened existence of the South African Frontier farmer. Like Emile Zola in the Dreyfus affair, Pringle attempts to absolve himself from his complicity in the history of South Africa by speaking his opposition through the figure of Pangola. Yet, as an intellectual, he is able to speak his opposition because he has experienced life as a frontier farmer first-hand, as co-author of, and complicitor in, the abuse he now opposes.

The questions Pringle raises are not far removed from the ones first asked on the frontier by Ntsikana: Pringle, too, faces the dilemma of confronting two apparently opposing worlds and he also seeks to determine on what terms God's presence manifests itself in this place, at this time. However, while Ntsikana looks outward and embraces a new world view, thus creating a new mythology of Africa, one that points to the confluence of disparate world views, Pringle only dabbles with the world view of the other and remains firmly ensconced in his liberal Eurocentric world view. Yet, if Pringle's opposition to slavery and abuse of the native is born from a sense of complicity in this abuse, then Ntsikana's evangelism—for that, ultimately, is what selling his newly-found religious views to the amaXhosa is—is also born from a level of intellectual complicity.

It is these varied attempts to find an appropriate language in which to convey the changing nature of South African society that ultimately tie the work of Ntsikana, Pringle and Thomas Bain together. The hybrid constructions of Ntsikana's god-names, like the mixed syntax of Kaatje Kekkelbek, or Pringle's desperate turn to God as the one

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metaphor. "Black women's backs become the parchment on which Douglass narrates his linear progression from bondage to freedom" ("In the first Place," *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. William L. Andrews [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993] 48). Whereas Douglass projects male slave suffering onto women, and appropriates their suffering as part of the male (slave) journey to freedom, Pringle contains his focus to the male body, turning it into the parchment on which a philosophical freedom can be written. To the woman, he ascribes the role of healer, for Pangola's wife administers buchu to his bleeding wounds.

constancy in his life all point to the emergence of a new, and, as yet, largely indefinable, sense of belonging that can be characterized as forms of *ukuhlangana*.

Chapter 4

Longing for a Place to Belong: Refashioning Nineteenth-Century Colonial Identity, 1850–1910

Specifically South African political and social identities remained fluid for the first part of the nineteenth century. Institutional politics took the lead from Britain and most colonial writers followed suit by intentionally writing for European audiences. Always conscious of the lower social status of the colonists, writers tended studiously to avoid associating with the land they described. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the writers of the period—like the politicians—turned to Europe, where political liberalism dominated, in their thinking. Liberal thinkers, both in South Africa and in Europe, initially advocated a system of multiracialism, based largely on class.[1] By the beginning of the nineteenth century in England, a gradual extension of the franchise to other race groups had come to be regarded as the correct approach to racial politics. This philosophy filtered through to the Cape Colony where the spirit of liberalism was the strongest in southern Africa, and manifested itself in the establishment of a non-racial franchise in 1854. By the mid-nineteenth century, a political and economic alliance had been formed between the Eastern Cape African peasantry and the British merchants. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido note that while both Afrikaner and African Nationalism were rooted in a distinctive social structure, a strong sense of cultural identity, and the development of a political consciousness in the rural areas, the principles of liberalism were dictated primarily by economic factors (*Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism* 2). A strong link existed between English-speaking colonials and the security of London's economic power, and to a large extent this ensured that the fierce nationalism of Africans and Afrikaners alike remained an alien concept to them. In the colonial context, white liberals thought in terms of class structures rather than race, and envisaged the incorporation of a minority of blacks into their ranks. However, in practice matters were different: while proposing gradual and partial assimilation, they could see nothing wrong with exploiting the black labour force for their own economic gain. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867, followed shortly after by the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1871, changed the political landscape in South Africa. Increasingly, Africans and Afrikaners alike were drawn into an urbanised, industrial world for which they were, in many respects, unprepared.

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[1] See Saul Dubow, "Race, Civilisation and Culture: the Elaboration of Segregationist Discourse in the InterWar Years," Marks and Trapido 71–94.

The signs of a dramatic change in the political climate had already been visible for a number of years. The primary symbol of imposed imperial order and the bastion of western civilization—the British Parliament—had replicated itself when in 1854 the Cape Colony was granted representative government. The establishment of an independent Parliament in the Cape Colony was a moment of symbolic importance that not only signified the imposition of law and order in this colonial outpost, but also set South Africa on the inevitable road to political maturity and independence. The Cape Parliament, a shiny new reflection of the Empire's own mechanisms of power, seemed to offer an opportunity to renew Britain's own tired political machinery in ways previously unimagined. Authors, politicians, and fortune-seekers alike turned to South Africa for inspiration.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1967), Hannah Arendt shows how the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1871 moved South Africa to the centre of imperial culture. However, it was not only the British who turned hopefully to the South African interior on the assumption that the material wealth of the colony would bring renewal; South Africans themselves were beginning to look to their own country for the same reasons. Laura Chrisman uses this shift to show how

> the analysis of late nineteenth century imperial subject-constitution needs to recognise the self-conscious way this subjectivity

> differentiates itself from, and engages with, mid-Victorian ideological, economic, and political formations. (*Rereading the Imperial Romance* 4–5)

Although Africans were trying to constitute an identity that was premised as much on access to Europe as it was on African tradition, the white missionaries remained highly derisive of these attempts. James Stewart, the principal of the Lovedale Institution, wrote in 1872:

> It is very plain that there are two parties even among the natives—the one progressive, and the other conservative of the old customs and non-progressive, to whom the times gone by are the brave days of old—far better than the present. Our sympathies are entirely with the party of progress. There is very little in old Kaffirdom worth preserving—and we think it will be the wisdom of the natives as soon as possible to move forward into today—and secure the blessings which the present time brings to them. (*Isigidimi* 4 Feb 1871, qtd in Opland "Transition" 138–39)

As the relationship between the missionaries and the African elite deteriorated, various theories of Social Darwinism began to gain a foothold in liberal thinking. Social Darwinism was based on assumed biological differences that determined the natural capabilities of racial groups. The concept of survival of the fittest provided rationalisation for suppressing the "inferior" black people politically and socially. It was in this dichotomous framework of integrationism on the one hand and Social Darwinism on the other, that writers like Olive Schreiner had to operate.

In contrast to the British settlers, Afrikaners and Africans in the Cape Colony could rely neither on access to the institutions of power nor on the strength of their links with Europe to assert themselves. Those things that had in the recent past appeared to offer Africans access to the structures of power—education and the right to participate freely in the economy of the Cape Colony—now seemed only to alienate people from their roots and traditions. In the decades that followed the establishment of the Cape parliament, African political rights, as well as their ability to access the economy, were steadily eroded by a succession of political manoeuvres. African leaders, often those with a western education, began to turn to the written word as a way in which to assert their right to belong and to be more than a peripheral afterthought in colonial society.

Although the rights of Afrikaners living in the Cape Colony were not restricted in the way those of Africans were, they too were often at the receiving end of British colonial dominance. By 1834, dissatisfaction with the British colonial government had led to a mass exodus of Afrikaners to the north, known as the Great Trek. Although Britain attempted to maintain political control of the areas beyond the Gariep (Orange) River, the signing of the Bloemfontein Convention in 1854 paved the way for the formation of the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. Further north, more Boers declared their independence.

The discovery of gold and diamonds in these nominally independent areas made them all the more attractive to British and colonial capitalists, and in 1877, Britain annexed the South African Republic and renamed it the Transvaal. Three years later, Transvaal Boers declared their independence. War broke out, and by 1881, the Boers had regained much of their independent status with the signing of the Pretoria Convention. The fragile peace that ensued hinged on maintaining a delicate balance between British economic interest in the region and the Boers' desire for independence. Relations between the Boer Republics and the Cape colonial government were often strained and any displays of militant Afrikaner nationalism in the north invariably affected English-Dutch relations in the Cape Colony. Afrikaans writers were torn between allegiance to the Colony in which they lived and the political aspirations of their people in the north. They, too, had to find ways in which to negotiate the political and social realities of the emergent social order.

In this chapter, then, I look at several ways in which South African writers have attempted to develop a clearer sense of belonging to (or in) Africa rather than Europe by using the ancestors or *iminyanya* as a framework within which to explore the interplay between the different cultures of the Eastern Cape. Often, the sense of belonging that emerges is defined by characters who reveal aspects of the *tussenskapper* or the *umhlanganisi*. These explorations of the critical terms and their usefulness in describing an emerging sense of belonging in Africa have been governed by my commitment to avoid reading works from different linguistic or cultural frameworks apart, but rather to contextualize them by viewing them as part of a single, interwoven fabric.[2]

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There are superficial parallels between the development of early Afrikaner Nationalism and early African Nationalism—for instance, both groups felt increasingly threatened by the rapid advance of English at the Cape, and were seeking new ways in which to establish a social and political identity for themselves. For the African elite (and this is true to some extent also for the rural Afrikaner),

> the struggle for selfhood, which their forefathers had initially fought on the battlefields, was taken up at centres of learning such as Lovedale. It was a struggle that was conducted on borrowed terms, in a borrowed discourse. (Leon de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians* 63)

Although the missionaries kept a tight rein on the content of isiXhosa literature,[3] some early Xhosa writers nonetheless saw the potential of the written word to articulate Xhosa

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[2] Stephen Hayes's note on the origin of the term "contextualize" offers a useful analogy for literary analysis in the cultural context of South Africa:

> The word "contextualize" is often used in theology. It is an image drawn from weaving cloth (textiles), where two sets of threads are woven together at right angles. The threads going across the width of the cloth are called the weft, while those going down the length of the cloth are called the warp. In contextual theology, the gospel is seen as the warp, and the society in which the gospel is proclaimed is seen as the weft, with the different coloured cloths being woven together so that a unique pattern is seen. The pattern cannot be seen in the individual threads, but only in the whole woven cloth.
>
> ("African Initiated Church Theology," 162, n.3)

[3] For the development of Xhosa literature in the nineteenth century, see Jeff Opland's work, in particular the following: "The Image of the Book in Xhosa Oral Poetry," *Current Writing* 7.2 (1995): 31–47; "The Transition From Oral to Written Literature in

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aspirations and identity. In 1862, in the first issue of a new missionary magazine, *Indaba*, Tiyo Soga wrote that the magazine could be "a beautiful vessel for preserving the stories, fables, legends, customs, anecdotes and history of our tribes." He continued:

> Our veterans of the Xhosa and Embo people must disgorge all they know. Everything must be imparted to the nation as a whole. Let us bring to life our ancestors: Ngconde, Togu, Tshiwo, Phalo, Rharhabe, Mlawu, Ngqika and Ndlambe. Let us resurrect our ancestral forebears who bequeathed us a rich heritage. (qtd in Opland "Xhosa Literature in Newspapers" 119)

The significance of Tiyo Soga's call to "bring to life our ancestors" should not be ignored, for in many ways, Xhosa identity was inscribed through visitations from the ancestors. On a very reductive level, Xhosa cosmology is concerned with accounting for and describing the role of the ancestral shades in society. The call to "bring to life the ancestors" in the pages of *Indaba* reflects Soga's position at the forefront of a redefinition of what it means to belong as an African. As an early Christian convert, Soga also speaks as someone who finds himself on the threshold of modernity. In *The God of the Xhosa*, Janet Hodgson suggests that at the turn of the nineteenth century, the "socio-cultural experience [of the amaXhosa] had been sufficiently disturbed to create a need for new models of explanation and control to cope with new situations" (9–10). Within the traditional cosmological framework, "bringing the ancestors back to life" in literature would indeed be an affirmation of identity in an entirely novel way.

Xhosa writers integrated the concept of the ancestors in imaginative ways in their writing. In an issue of *Umshumayeli* (an early Xhosa magazine) two students contributed a dialogue between "Lazy" and "Student." In the dialogue, Lazy asks Student "Inncwadi I kwa gumtu, yinto ni?" ("Is a book like a person? What is it?"—qtd

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Xhosa, 1823–1909, *Oral Tradition and Literacy: Changing Visions of the World: Selected Conference Papers: University of Natal, Durban, July 1985*, ed. R.A. Whitaker and E.R. Sienaert (Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre, 1986) 135–50; "Xhosa Literature in Newspapers, 1837–1909," *Rethinking South African Literary History*, ed. Johannes A. Smit, Johan van Wyk, and Jean-Philippe Wade (Durban: Y Press, 1996) 110–28.

in Opland "Transition" 141). In the subsequent explanation, Student informs Lazy that books can capture your histories. In doing so, Student inadvertently affirms the potential of the written word to ascribe identity in a traditional sense, for it is through the ancestors that the amaXhosa manifest their identity as people. If books can preserve the words of the ancestors, they in fact become ancestors themselves, and thus present a significant medium through which the ancestors can visit among us. In the twentieth century, G.B. Sinxo incorporated a quote from the Bible, or a traditional proverb, at the start of every chapter in *Umfundisi waseMthuqwasi* [The Reverend from Mthuqwasi] (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1927). As Sizwe Satyo remarks, "it is a common occurrence among the Xhosa to interpret events in life in terms of what their ancestors said in the past about them. What the forefathers said is believed to be preserved in the proverbs, other wise sayings and some traditional stories" (*Traditional Concepts* 32). Thus incorporating a quote from a book or a known ancestor is a way of bringing the ancestors to life in the pages of a book.

The written word may therefore have been, as De Kock points out, a "borrowed discourse" (*Civilising Barbarians* 63), but Africans were determined to use this "borrowed discourse" on their own terms. By calling on Xhosa writers to contribute stories about their ancestors, Soga reaffirms the point that writing can become a means through which the amaXhosa could assert their identity and preserve their traditions in a time when colonial structures were rapidly subsuming traditional ways of existence. Just as Sol Plaatje would do later with regard to Setswana in the introductions to his novel, *Mhudi: An Epic of South African Native Life One Hundred Years Ago* (1930) and to his collection of Setswana proverbs, *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and their European Equivalents* (1916), Soga saw historical and ethnographic description and data collection as means of preserving Xhosa culture.

André Odendaal describes the latter part of the nineteenth century as a time when "previously independent African chiefdoms were incorporated into expanding colonial structures" (*Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* 1). Even before the last incidents of armed resistance against the colonial government in 1878, the small mission-educated African elite had come to realise the futility of armed resistance. The

Xhosa newspapers to some extent mitigated the deculturalizing effect of the shift in the political status quo, and, like the early Afrikaner nationalists, Xhosa writers used the newspaper as a site for awakening a political consciousness among their people.[4] In June of 1882, Isaac Wauchope Citashe published a poem in *Isigidimi samaXhosa* (The Xhosa Messenger) exhorting his people to take up the pen as a means of struggle:

Zimkile! Mfo wohlanga,
Phuthuma, phuthuma;
Yishiy' imfakadalo,
Phutuma ngosiba;
Thabath' iphepha neinki,
Likhaka lakho elo.

Sayemk'amalungelo,
Qubula usiba;
Ngxasha, ngxasha ngeinki,
Hlala esitulweni,
Unganeni kwaHoho;
Dubula ngosiba.

Thambeka Umhlathi ke,
Bambel' ebunzi;
Zigqale iinyaniso,
Umise ngomxholo;
Bek' izitho ungalwi,
Umsindo liyilo.

[Your cattle are plundered, compatriot!
After them! After Them!
Lay down the musket,
Take up the pen.
Seize paper and ink;
That's your shield.

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[4] It would be problematic, in this context, to rely too heavily on Benedict Anderson's work on the relationship between newspapers and nationalism. Although Anderson's work on imagined communities in Europe has shaped the way we perceive the relationship between "literacy and the imagination of new religious and political communities" (Peterson, *Creative Writing* 6), there are several important differences between Anderson's model and the reality of the nineteenth-century Cape that make the model more problematic in this context.

Your rights are plundered!
Grab a pen,
Load it, load it with ink;
Sit in your chair,
Don't head for Hoho:
Fire with your pen.

Put pressure on the page,
Bring your mind to bear;
Focus on facts,
And speak loud and clear;
Don't rush into battle:
Anger stutters.]

(qtd in Opland, "Image" 33[5])

Citashe frames his call in terms of cattle, which formed an integral part of defining wealth in traditional Xhosa society.[6] In the second stanza, he repeats the first line of the poem, replacing the word "cattle" with "rights." In this way, he extends the traditional concept of wealth to include the more abstract notion of political rights. Wealth, identity and the written word become conflated, and thus when Citashe exhorts his people to take up their pens, he is in fact also asking them to inscribe their identity onto paper, to use this new medium to preserve and reaffirm their identity.

The use of writing as a form of protest coincided with the consolidation of African political ideals into more formal, western political entities. Many of the African leaders at the time had been thoroughly indoctrinated by the Social Darwinism that prevailed in liberal thinking, and that is why Elijah Makiwane, an early president of the Native Educational Association, could write that "the rising generation forgets that the natives are an inferior race" (qtd in Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics* 8). Nineteenth-century African leaders operated firmly within the framework of the "Victorians' conception of themselves as the leaders of civilisation and as pioneers of industry and progress." As Odendaal notes, it is easy to dismiss the political aspirations of the African population in the nineteenth century as "naive, unrealistic, timid and conservative." However, he argues, one has to remember that

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[5] Trans. Jeff Opland.

[6] G.V. Mona points out that the reference to cattle is "understood because of the concord ZI—of *zimkile*" ("National Identity and Xhosa Poetry (1880–1900)," *Alternation* 6.1 [1999]: 58).

> [t]heir aspirations were valid for their time and place, but their moderate political strategy—informed by a value-system based on pre-industrial African society, the Christian faith and mid-Victorian political liberalism—was overtaken by the great changes that took place in their lifetimes. The fundamental shift to an industrial society, the failure of political liberalism as reflected in the Union of South Africa, led to changed material conditions—such as urbanisation—and forged new psychological and ideological constructs in which their ideology and strategy could no longer cope. (xii)

In 1882, William Wellington Gqoba became the first African editor of the *Isigidimi*, and during the four years that he headed the newspaper, he produced a wealth of cultural and historical information on the amaXhosa. He wrote with an awareness of the desire for greater independence among black people in South Africa (Opland, "Newspapers" 110) and used his newspaper as a mouthpiece for formal political structures, such as the Imbumba Yama Nyama, of which he was a founding member. The formation of the Imbumba Yama Nyama fell within the framework of Ntsikana's plea to his followers to be "njenge mbumba yamanyama"—united. The organisation was formed largely as an opposition to the Afrikaner Bond, a nationalistic movement initiated by the members of the First Afrikaans Language Movement. The opposition between the two political institutions is evident from the fact that "*Imbumba* members claimed that their organisation was the true *Afrikaner Bond*, while the organisation of the *Afrikaners* was merely the *Boeren Bond*" (Odendaal, *Black Protest Politics* 8).

In 1884, Gqoba published one of the most significant pieces of Xhosa literature in the nineteenth century, "Inxoxo enkhulu ngemfundo" [The Great Discussion on Education] in *Isigidimi*. The poem was later included in Walter Rubusana's anthology, *Zemk' inkomo magwalandini* [There Go Your Cattle, You Cowards] (1906). It is a convoluted discussion between a number of characters about the merits of western education. The main argument is that the education system did not provide Africans with the knowledge necessary to survive in the new dispensation, although pertinent references are also made to other matters of political concern, such as the emergence of the Afrikaner Bond, a political party advocating Afrikaner interests. One of the characters involved in the discussion, Rauk'Emsini, attacks the Afrikaner Bond, saying:

> Sithetha nje kukw'iBhondi
> Ebuqili buyindoqo;
> Ifungele, ibhinqele
> Ukuthi ePalamente,
> Ezimali zifundisa
> Oluhlanga lumunyama,
> Mazihluthwe, maziphele.
>
> Ngamani na law'anjalo?
> Eyona nto soba nayo,
> Imihlaba selinabo,
> Oozigusha, noozinkomo,
> Zonk'izintw'ebesinazo,
>
> …
>
> Sibulele ndawoni na?
>
> Nale voti ikwanjalo,
> Kukhw'ikethe kwanakuyo,
> Asivunywa kany'impela
> Thina bantu abanyama.

("Inxoxo," 105)

> [There is currently a Bond
> Which is cunning and artful;
> It has vowed
> To raise in Parliament
> That the money for the education
> Of Black people
> Should be withdrawn, should be stopped.
>
> What kind of people are these?
> What shall we possess,
> For the land now belongs to them—
> Our sheep, our cattle,
> All that we used to own
>
> …

For what should we be thankful?
The vote is also like that, too:
There is discrimination.
We are not allowed
We Black people.]

(Mona, "National Identity" 66[7])

Through Rauk'Emsini, Gqoba draws a parallel between access to education and access to political rights. Just as political allegiance in the early years of British colonization of South Africa had shifted constantly according to expediency, thus allowing the Afrikaners and the amaXhosa at times to join forces against Britain, so the second half of the nineteenth century was also characterized by shifting political allegiances. By speaking out against the Bond, Gqoba (and by implication also Imbumba) were for the first time openly aligning the African elite with the British. This trend was to continue: in *Native Life in South Africa* (London, 1916; rpt. 1982), Sol Plaatje appealed to the British public on the grounds that the Africans were loyal to the British Crown during the South African War and even offered African support during the First World War. Although he does so with a sense of irony, S.E.K Mqhayi also asserts the "Britishness" of the African population in his poem, "Singama Britani" [We are Britons] (reprinted in Rubusana, *Zemk' inkomo* 495–500).[8]

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[7] Trans. G.V. Mona.

[8] Although Gqoba and other members of Imbumba Yama Nyama did not support the political aims of the Afrikaner Bond, some Africans did. John Tengo Jabavu, who in 1884 became the editor of the first independent Xhosa newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (The Opinions of the Dark People), dealt with the Bond on several levels. The funding for his newspaper came from a number of liberal whites, including James Rose Innes and his brother. In part as payback for this favour, but also in part because of a conviction that they were honestly interested in African concerns, Jabavu initially supported the liberal-minded independent politicians, including J.W. Sauer, John X. Merriman and James Rose Innes. Although they were elected as independent members of parliament, they became members of the Afrikaner Bond cabinet backed by Cecil John Rhodes. When, in 1895, the Jameson Raid shattered this alliance between the Bond and Rhodes, Sauer and Merriman officially joined the Bond in opposition to Rhodes and the pro-British progressives. Jabavu, taking the Afrikaner Bond leader, J.H. Hofmeyr, at face

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Rauk'Emsini's discussion in Gqoba's poem raises the accusation that, despite bringing some good things (like education) to the African people, the government policy of paying Africans lower wages prevented them from attaining their full potential as citizens of the country. Even as one of the participants, Qondilizwe, argues that "aba bantu bapesheya" (the people from overseas—90) should be thanked for bringing education to the amaXhosa, his choice of words reveals a sense of African unity and implied opposition to the European settlers.[9] He refers to Africans as "bantu abanyama"

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value when he supported African franchise in a speech, supported the Bond. This alienated him from the main body of the African population, who did not trust Hofmeyr. The Bond's verbal affirmation of African political rights reflected the delicate political balance in the Eastern Cape, where significant numbers of African voters in certain constituencies were able to determine who held the balance of power (André Odendaal discusses the intricacies that led to this bizarre situation in greater depth in Chapter 2 of *Vukani Bantu: The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics* [Cape Town: David Philip, 1984]). Jabavu's alliance with the Bond displeased many Africans, and one writer, Thomas Mqanda, wrote:

Sayama ngentab'omlungukazi	You who lean on the White woman's mountain,
Le kutiwa yi Kapa:	The one called Cape Town:
Hamba nyoka emnyama.	Go back, black snake,
Ecanda isiziba.	Which cleaves pools,
Uye kulomzi apo sibulawa kona.	Return home where we're being killed.
Jong'indlela zamagwangqa,	Study the white man's paths.
Jongwa yimfakadolo:	And you're studied by a breechloader;
Lukozi lumapiko angqangqasholo.	You hawk with powerful wings

(qtd in Jeff Opland, "Transition" 146; trans: Jeff Opland)

[9] Qondilizwe's argument reads:

Mandiqale ngalendawo	Let me start with this question
Yelikete lale Mfundo	Of discrimination in Education
Anitsho na kule ngxoxo	Don't you say in this discussion
Ukuti, kwangale mfundo,	That the very education
Yona, yona, iyanikwa;	Yes, it is offered;
Ninonyana, bayatitsha	You have sons who are teachers
Bayabala, bayaqwela,	They can count, they excel
Abagqitwa, ngamagwangqa	They compare well with White children
Sekusel' ibala lodwa?	Only the colour makes a difference.
Xa kunjalo yiyipi—na?	If it is like that—where is discrimination?
Enekete, nenzani—na?	What are you actually criticizing?

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(the people of the gumball) rather than simply as "abantu" (people). In so doing, he suggests a wider sense of political unity than that which is offered by the traditional allegiances to clans or chieftains and he also alludes to the name of the new political organisation. At the same time, he also invokes Ntsikana's request that his followers should stick together.

One of the other participants, Finizulu, points to the discrimination in the educational system and argues in favour of equal remuneration for teachers of different races. His argument for equal education is framed, not in terms of the benefits that are offered, but in terms of what is absent:

> It'inteto yamagwangqa[10]
> Yoluhlanga lwapesheya
> Kolohlanga lumunyama,
> Si-Latini, si-Hebrere,
> Ezo nteto nesiGrike
> Kwaba ntsundw'azifanele,
> Babebangwa ke lel' kete.
>
> ("Inxoxo" 85)
>
> [Whites say,
> The race from overseas
> To the black race,
> Latin, Hebrew and
> Those languages and Greek

(Zemk' Inkomo 99) (Mona, "National Identity" 64–65; trans.
G.V. Mona)

[10] The use of the word *yamagwangqa* (pale brown ones) is a derogatory term for people of European ancestry. Jeff Peires notes that in his collection of Xhosa stories, *Imibengo* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1935), "the only politically oriented change is the replacement of the derogatory *amagwanqa* (pale brown ones) for the more polite "white people"" ("The Lovedale Press: Literature for the Bantu Revisited," *History in Africa* 6 [1979]: 164).

Should not be taught to Blacks
The cause is discrimination.]

(Mona, "National Identity" 65[11])

Although Finizulu and the other participants clearly envisage themselves as part of an African body politic, Finizulu's insistence on being taught the classical languages suggests an awareness of the new terms on which an African sense of identity and belonging would be based. Finizulu suspects that in the new colonial order, the failure to acquire a mastery of the European classics will inevitably bear as punishment the failure to be accepted as an equal and economically competitive member of society. The African's identity is therefore delicately poised between the traditional world view in which, as John Henderson Soga points out, the ancestors remain central (*The AmaXosa* 151) and a new sensibility in which a knowledge of the language of the European ancestors has become equally important. In other words, the successful African is the *umhlanganisi*, the one who can engage in *ukuhlangana* and bring together these world views into a meshed whole.

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Just as it did in the case of Gqoba and other Xhosa writers, the glaring inequality in the colonial education system provided thematic impetus to Afrikaans writers. Afrikaner identity was predicated from the start on a strong sense of political resistance to authority, whether Dutch or British. The term "Afrikaner" was first recorded in 1707 when, during a period of unrest protesting the nepotism of the Governor, Simon Adriaen van der Stel, one Hendrik Bibault—a South African-born farmer of French Huguenot descent—allegedly uttered the now infamous words "Ik ben Afrikaander" as he resisted arrest.[12] Bibault meant this more in terms of his opposition to a colonial government that did not acknowledge his interests and his independence from Europe and European traditions than in terms of either race or class. Initially, at least, this meaning of the term prevailed, and it was certainly the way in which early British travellers like John Barrow saw the colonial Dutch trekboers (qtd in Smith, *Grounds of Contest* 4).

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[11] Trans. G.V. Mona.

The forms of the Afrikaans language that emerged differed from region to region, and the register varied considerably—mostly according to class and the distance from Cape Town, which still held sway as the centre of colonial civilisation in South Africa. While the language of the white upper classes largely remained close to Dutch, the racially mixed working classes spoke a more distinct language that became known as "Afrikaans."[13] Isabel Hofmeyr points out that for most of the nineteenth century, the Afrikaner elite was concentrated in the Western Cape and that they gravitated toward professions such as education and the ministry ("Building a Nation from Words" 97). As was the case in the Eastern Cape, where the educated African elite suffered a similar fate, this led to an "'overproduction' of educated men." The over-production of educated Afrikaners became problematic, for "enlarged state revenue flowed more towards wealthy urban English schools than to poorer rural Dutch schools," leaving many Afrikaner intellectuals unemployed and dissatisfied.

At the Cape, these concerns found an outlet when, in 1876, a small group of Afrikaans intellectuals in the Western Cape founded a small Afrikaans-language newspaper, *Die Patriot*. The group called itself the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA—The Society of Real Afrikaners).[14] *Die Patriot* gave these Afrikaner politicians a

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[12] See André Brink, "Afrikaners," Re*inventing a Continent Writing and Politics in South Africa, 1982–1995* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1996) 77.

[13] For a discussion of poverty in the Cape, see Colin Bundy, "Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape Before Whiteism," *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 13 (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1984).

[14] For further discussion of the First Language Movement, see J.C. Kannemeyer,

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semblance of cultural substance and also a more populist vision, which they then exploited in their struggle against foreign (mainly British) traders and their investment capital in the diamond mines in Kimberley. The magazine was written in the dialect of Afrikaans spoken in the western Cape town of Paarl, and sought to "define white Afrikaners in terms of a cultural, organic nation" (Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation" 98).[15] They initially received the guarded support of J.H. Hofmeyr, a prominent Afrikaner politician from the Cape. However, he did not always share their interest in promoting a language that obviously held sway among the lower classes, and he remained fiercely pro-Dutch. Hofmeyr soon outmanoeuvred the pro-Afrikaans Paarl contingent and *Die Patriot* subsequently met its demise—but not before becoming the second-highest-selling magazine in the Cape, thus showing that there was sufficient interest to warrant promoting Afrikaans as a literary language. This initial effort to produce an Afrikaans literature has, with retrospective nationalistic fervour, been termed "Die Eerste Taalbeweging"—The First Language Movement. In fact, it was little more than a sequence of loose, unorganized events that raised an awareness of Afrikaans language and culture in a very localized community. The readership of *Die Patriot* was "rural, Afrikaans and *minderbevoorreg* (under-privileged)" (Von Wielligh, *Eerste Schrijvers* [First Writers], qtd in Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation" 98). It would be wrong, in this context, to associate "underprivileged" with living in a state of poverty. Rather, "underprivileged" referred to a group of politically and socially marginalized people

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Letterkunde en beweging voor 1900: oorsig en bloemlesing [Literature and Movement before 1900] (Pretoria: Academica, 1975).

[15] The first edition of *Die Patriot* carried poems that defined the nation in terms of language, country, religion and history, whereas the earlier Afrikaans text, *Kaatje Kekkelbek, or Life among the Hottentots*, was multilingual and placed the use of Afrikaans in the hands of the "coloured" protagonist, Kaatje Kekkelbek (Katie Chatterbox) and the Boers. Louis Meurant's famous *Zamenspraak tusschen Klaas Waarzegger en Jan Twyfelaar over het onderwerp van afscheiding tusschen de Oostelijke en Westelijke Provinsie* [Conversation between Klaas Soothsayer and Jan Sceptic on the subject of the secession of the Eastern Province from the Western Province] (Kaapstad: Suid-Afrikaanse Biblioteek, 1973) was written in the Eastern Cape dialect and proposed no racial difference.

whose future was unsure—teachers and clerics who faced the prospect of losing their jobs with the increased emphasis on English throughout the Cape Colony.

Among the leading Afrikaner intellectuals and writers of the period was C.P. Hoogenhout (1843–1922), a Dutch citizen who had come to South Africa in 1869 as a teacher. He soon became a significant contributor to *Die Patriot* and was a forceful advocate of the Afrikaner cause. In addition to Bible translation, he also wrote a novella, *Catherina, die dogter van die advokaat* [1879—Catherine, the Daughter of the Advocate] and several didactic nationalist poems. In his doggerel "Vooruitgang" [Progress], Hoogenhout voices his indignation at the privileging of English in colonial schools:

> Engels! Engels! Alles Engels! Engels wat jy sien en hoor:
> In ons skole, in ons kerke word ons moedertaal vermoor.
> Ag, hoe word ons volk verbaster; daartoe werk ons leeraars saam:
> Hollands nog in sekere skole—is bedrog, 'n blote naam!
> Wie hom nie laat anglisere, word geskolde en gesmaad;
> Tot in Vrystaat en Transvaal al, oweral dieselfde kwaad.
> "Dis vooruitgang!" roep die skreeuers, "Dis beskawing wat nou kom!"
> Dié wat dit nie wil gelowe dié is ouderwets en dom.
>
> [English! English! Naught but English seen and heard:
> In our schools, in our churches, our Tongue is murdered.
> Alas! Our nation becomes bastard; in this our clergy do comply:
> Dutch still in some schools—only in name, for 'tis a shameless lie!
> Those who wish not to be anglicized are scolded and abused:
> Even in the Free State and Transvaal, this evil now is used!
> "Tis progress!" they say, "Civilisation at last has come!"
> Those who don't believe us are antiquated and dumb.]

(qtd in *Groot Verseboek* 7–8)

Whereas Gqoba was concerned with the inequality of the education and the lack of access to the classical languages of Europe, Hoogenhout takes this access for granted and instead phrases the Afrikaner's quest for political identity in terms of what he feels is lacking in the education system: recognition of that part of his Afrikaner being that is unquestionably African—his language, Afrikaans.[16]

For more than a century, Afrikaners had defined themselves in terms of their opposition to the European powers that governed South Africa. To this end, they had often sided with the indigenous peoples against successive colonial governments and many Afrikaners had (as Barrow and other early European travellers duly noted) almost completely assimilated themselves into the indigenous societal structures. Already socially marginalized, the educated Afrikaner elite realized that if they were to retain at least some political advantage, they would have to gain access to the very political institutions they had until now resisted. This posed a paradox that was also evident in the early attempts to constitute a new African identity: (re)constituting a political identity implied walking the delicate tightrope between acknowledging Europe and denying what they perceived as their own indigenous heritage.

Hoogenhout attempts to gain greater access to the institutions of power by opposing not the structures of power, but the language of those structures. His personification of the Afrikaans language in "Vooruitgang" hints that the death of the language inevitably also implies disintegration of the Afrikaners' sense of identity. Hoogenhout's bitter observation, "Dis Vooruitgang! … Dis beskawing wat nou kom!" ('Tis Progress! … Civilization has finally come!) suggests that there is in fact an alternative definition of "civilization" and that he wishes to constitute his identity in terms of that alternative.

S.J. du Toit (1847–1911), an intriguing intellectual whose influence on Afrikaans literature is still visible today, attempted to provide this alternative in his polemic contributions to *Die Patriot*.[17] A child prodigy, Du Toit read both English and Dutch by the age of four. As a young man, he studied theology, but eventually left the ministry because of a disagreement over religious interpretation. He was widely read and respected as an intellectual, although his outspoken nature also readily made him enemies. Politically, he remained a conservative, but he eventually parted company with the Afrikaner Bond after the Jameson Raid, which, paradoxically, he condemned while continuing to support Cecil Rhodes.[18] His own expansionist tendencies eventually brought him to the other side of the political spectrum and he became both pro-British and pro-Rhodes, a *volte-face* that alienated him from many Afrikaners. During the early phase of his political development, Du Toit called for the formation of an Afrikaner Bond

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[16] N.P. van Wyk Louw, a leading Afrikaans intellectual of the twentieth century, echoes Hoogenhout's sentiments as late as 1967: "It is as if the aspiring young writer, including the Afrikaans writer, were told: 'If you have something to say, my boy, then write it in English! And if you don't know English well enough, then learn it like Joseph Conrad: but write in English and save your soul!'" (qtd in André Brink, *Mapmakers: Writing in a State of Siege* (London: Faber & Faber, 1983) 96.

> waarin al wat Afrikaner is sig kan thuis voel en samewerk tot heil van 'n Verenigde Suid Afrika, … waarin gen nasionaliteit ons van mekaar skei nie, maar waarin almal wat Afrika erken as hulle Vaderland same woon en werk as broeders van één huis, al is hulle van engelse, hollandse, franse of duitse afkoms, met uitsluiting alleen van dié wat

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[17] Du Toit's life is summarised in Dorothea van Zyl, "Eeufeesviering van Afrikaans se Eerste histories roman," *Stilet* 10.2 (1998): 23–42. P.J. Nienaber wrote an rather uncritical biography of du Toit, *Ds. S.J. Du Toit, die eensame Ismael* [Rev. S.J. Du Toit, the Lonely Ishmael] (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1940).

[18] Amidst the rising tensions between the two Boer Republics and the Cape Colony, Cecil John Rhodes, then prime minister of the Cape, enlisted the support of Alfred Beit, one of the Randlords (the wealthy owners of gold mines on the Rand), to capture the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (ZAR) for the British and thus to secure their own financial gain. A secret base camp, under the command of Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, was established on land owned by Cecil Rhodes at Pitsani in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The idea was that when the time arrived, Jameson would be informed and he would rush to the support of the rebels. After a series of ill-phrased communications, Jameson led an abortive raid into the ZAR on 29 December 1895. His party was soon surrounded and forced to surrender. The Jameson Raid failed in its initial aim and ended Rhodes's political career, but it set in motion a chain of events that culminated in the showdown known as the South African War, or the Boer War. The South African War was the most expensive war ever fought, all for control over the country's mineral wealth. Rhodes died with his legendary fortune intact; Beit's estate was valued at £8 million, and that of Wehrner, another Randlord involved in the Raid, at £14 million.

> van Engeland praat as hulle "home" of van Holland en Duitsland as hulle "Vaderland" en wat hier net hulle beurs vul met Afrikaanse welvaart om dit dan in Europa te gaan verteer.[18]
>
> [in which all who are Afrikaners can feel at home and work together for the welfare of a United South Africa, ... in which no nationality separates us, but in which all who recognise Africa as their Fatherland live and work together as brothers in one house, even though they are of english, dutch, french or german heritage, with the exclusion alone of those who speak of England as their "home," or of Holland and Germany as the "Fatherland" and who are here to fill their coffers with African welfare, only to spend it in Europe.[19]]
>
> (qtd in Kannemeyer, *Geskiedenis*, 1:45)

Du Toit's definition relied explicitly on race as a constituent element of Afrikaner identity. It also implied that in order to be an Afrikaner, one had to deny Europe and become part of Africa. This constituted a significant problem, and Hoogenhout saw an opportunity to overcome the problem through the use of Afrikaans.

The variety of names by which Afrikaans was known indicates that it was not the exclusive property of a white elite: "hotnotstaal" (Hottentot Language), "griekwataal" (Griqua language), "kombuistaal" (kitchen language), "kombuiskaffir" (kitchen Kaffir), "plattaal" (vulgar language), and "brabbeltaal" (gibberish). For the Afrikaner, access to Africa could legitimately be achieved by laying claim to this language he shared with many other indigenous South Africans. By claiming the right to use Afrikaans as a vehicle for expressing his political aspirations, Hoogenhout therefore writes into existence an alternative premise for identity—one that is based in Africa rather than in Europe. Whereas William Wellington Gqoba had argued for access to the classical languages of Europe in "Inxoxo enkhulu ngemfundo" in order to (re)constitute African identity, Hoogenhout argues for access to Africa through one of its languages.

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[19] The Afrikaans "verteer"—to consume, or to digest, has a far stronger negative association than the English "spend."

The appropriation of Afrikaans for the exclusive use of a white Afrikaner elite implicated Afrikaners in the machinations of the colonial enterprise, and S.J. du Toit, the author of the Bond's manifesto, recognized this fact. His poem, "Hoe die Hollanders die Kaap ingeneem het" (How the Dutch occupied the Cape—In Opperman, *Groot Verseboek* 9–12),[20] tells the story of colonization from the perspective of Danster (Dancer), whom he identifies as a Griqua.[21] In the opening lines, Danster addresses his masters (a clear indication of the relations of power at work in the poem) and insists on the truth of his narrative.[22] The repeated insistence on the truthfulness of the narrative suggests that Du Toit would like his readers to also acknowledge the treachery that the narrator is about to reveal in the poem as the Griquas watch the arrival of the Dutch ships. Du Toit acknowledges from the start that the land was occupied by the time Europeans arrived in Africa—which stands in stark contrast to the way in which early travel writers tried to erase local inhabitants from the landscape (see Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country"). The terms of European occupation are set soon after their arrival when they start to barter for fresh food. The indignant Danster notes that in exchange for “vet skaap en bok en bees” (fat sheep and goat and cattle, *Groot Verseboek* 10), the Griquas received only a tiny piece of copper. Immediately afterwards, the Europeans barter for the land—and again the narrator insists on the truthfulness of his account:

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[20] A distinction should be made between "Dutch" and "Afrikaner." In the manifesto of the GRA, Du Toit speaks of Afrikaners as those who have identified with the African continent, whereas the Dutch would be those who still regard Europe as "home." This distinction is significant in terms of the implication it has for the construction of Afrikaner identity in this poem.

[21] The Griquas occupy a unique place in South African society. The *Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa. The Real Story* (Cape Town: The Readers Digest Association, 1994) offers this description:

> They called themselves the Griqua, and they prided themselves on being descendants of both Europeans and Khoi, and in some cases Malay or African slaves. They could trace their forefathers to two clans, the Koks and the Barendses, the first made up mainly of Khoikhoi and the second of mixed European descent—which led to the name by which they were more commonly known in the 18th century, the Bastards. (138)

[22] "...glo vir my/So waar as waar die waarheid is" (...believe me/As honestly as the truth is truthful).

En hul wat Duusvolk is, hul sê
Dis waar wat ek jul vertel
Hul wys toen hul wil grond ook hê
So klein maar nes ‘n beestevel
Dis waar wat ek vertel.

Hoor nou hoe skelm is Duusvolk is,
Hul sny die vel in riempies rond,
En net so lank as die riem is,
Sê hulle toen dis hul grond
Hul meet al in die rond.

[Then those white folk said
—And what I say is true—
They asked for a patch of ground
No larger than an ox’s hide—
Honestly, I do not lie to you.

But hear now how sly these Whiteys are:
From the hide they cut a thong
And stretched it out full long
This they claimed as their ground—
For they were measuring in the round.]

(*Groot Verseboek* 10)

Disgusted by such treachery, the Griquas walk away, but their desire for copper forces them to return. The Europeans repeat their deceptions time and again, and in the end, they trick the Griquas into firing a cannon.[23] The Griquas then run away in fear and only stop once they reach the bank of the Grootrivier (Great River, or Gariep).[24]

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[23] This incident is reminiscent of Bartholomeu Diaz’s initial encounter with local inhabitants of Mossel Bay in 1498. After unsuccessfully bartering for water, the sailors fired a cannon onto the shore, thus forcing the local inhabitants to run away. Diaz then planted a padrão on the coastline, but as soon as the sailors had disappeared beyond the

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The poem is unique not only in the way it acknowledges the historic complicity of the Afrikaner in dispossessing the African people of their land, but also in the way it suggests a degree of commonality between the Griquas and the Afrikaners. The eventual flight of the Griquas to an area beyond the reach of the colonial government and their desire for independence from Britain can be paralleled with the Afrikaners' trek away from the confines of British colonial power. Whereas Thomas Pringle (in "Song of the Wild Bushmen") had allowed his Bushman to speak in the idealized voice of European enlightenment, Du Toit's Griqua narrator speaks of the treachery of the Dutch (whom the Griqua claimed as their forebears). Through Danster, Du Toit identifies with the struggle of the Griqua peoples for independence for, like the Griquas, the Afrikaners had trekked north to escape British rule. While expressing a sense of Afrikaner complicity in the colonial enterprise, he therefore also voices solidarity with the indigenous people and shows how they share more with the Afrikaner than merely a language. In this way, Du Toit reconfirms the Afrikaners' links with Africa and establishes a sense of identity that falls somewhere between Europe and Africa.

Du Toit's complex vision of the Afrikaner's place in Africa is best illustrated in his novel, *Di koningin fan Skeba; of Salamo syn oue goudfelde in Sambesia* (The Queen of Sheba; or Solomon's Ancient Goldfields in Sambesia, 1898).[25] *Di koningin fan Skeba*

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firing range of their cannons, the local inhabitants tore the padrão down. This encounter set up the terms on which much of the colonization of Southern Africa would occur: the colonizers would gain access to the land by treachery or by show of force, and the local inhabitants would undermine and resist them at every available opportunity.

[24] The Bushmen people called the river, which later became the northern border of the Cape Colony, the Gariep. The trekboers and others called it the Grootrivier or the Orange River. Since 1994, the river has again been known by its original name, the Gariep.

[25] The "Sambesia" of the title refers to modern-day Zimbabwe. Dorothea van Zyl makes reference to the parallels between du Toit's text and Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (London: Cassell & Co., 1886) in "Eeufeesviering van Afrikaans se eerste historiese roman [Centenary of the first Historical novel in Afrikaans]," *Stilet* 10.2 (1998): 23–42. However, the visit to the African priest in *Di koningin fan Skeba* also resembles the cave visits in John Buchan's *Prester John* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1910). Du Toit's pro-British sympathies in his late career also led to an acquaintance

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is closely linked to Rhodes's expansionist philosophy (Van Zyl, "Di koningin fan Skeba—een honderd jaar nôi van Zimbabwe" 39). As Stephan Meyer notes, there are two "guiding interests" underlying the novel:

> The one is to provide clues leading to the hidden gold, the second is to search there for reasons for the collapse of this ancient civilisation which was perceived to be in a similar situation to that of the newly founded Boer republics and British colonies with their Afrikaans subjects, who should learn as much as they can from the past to prevent history from repeating itself. ("Fact(or) Fiction" 132)

Di koningin fan Skeba is the promised sequel to Du Toit's earlier work, *Sambesia, of Salomo's goudvelde bezocht in 1894* (1895), a non-fictional account of the author's journey into Zimbabwe and his visit to the Zimbabwe ruins. *Di koningin fan Skeba* fictionalises these events, liberally interweaving fact and reality. The central character is a Mr. du Toit who journeys to the Zimbabwe ruins and discovers and ancient treasure there. The novel is based on the myth that the ruins were constructed by some ancient European civilisation on the site of Solomon's legendary goldfields and that the Queen of Sheba inhabited them.[26] Du Toit's conflation of fact and fiction in the novel, in addition to the use of his own last name as that of his main character, caused great confusion among some of his readers.[27] Many readers, for instance, did not manage to appreciate the distinctions he made when he wrote in the prelude to the novel that it was

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with Alfred, Lord Milner, the South African High Commissioner and Governor of the conquered Boer colonies. John Buchan was a member of Milner's so-called "kindergarten," a coterie of Oxford-trained young administrators. It is tempting to contemplate the possibility of some mutual influence between the two writers arising from their mutual acquaintance with Milner.

[26] For the development of du Toit's mythology of Sambesia, see Dorothea van Zyl, "Afrikaners reik uit na Suider-Afrika—een eeu later [Afrikaners reach out to Southern Africa—One Century Later]," *Stilet* 5.2 (1993): 49–62.

[27] See Dorothea van Zyl, "Di koningin fan Skeba—honderd jaar nôi van Zimbabwe [The Queen of Sheba—for One Hundred Years the Girl of Zimbabwe]" *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde* 34.4 (1996): 39–50 for an account of the reception and the consequent misunderstandings. Stephan Meyer also offers an intriguing account of the interplay

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> Niet een *geschiedenis*, ook niet eene algeheele *verdichting*: maar eene *herleving* van dien tijd zoo na mogelijk, volgens de gegevens welke wij hebben in oude historische werken en uit deze overblijfselen.
>
> [Not a *history*, nor yet a complete *fiction*: but an entire *revival* as best as possible of this time, according to the information we have in old historical works and in these remains.]

(*Skeba* 1)

To an extent, du Toit *wanted* his narrative to be true, for as Stephan Meyer points out, he wished to create a "myth about the white origin of civilisation in southern Africa (which can be neither falsified nor verified) with which to legitimate expansion into Zimbabwe" ("Fact(or) Fiction" 130).[28] However, there was more at stake than expansion: verifying the myth of white origin also legitimated the Afrikaner's claim to the land and thus extended the process of (re)inscribing an Afrikaner identity into Africa that Du Toit had begun in "Hoe die Hollanders die Kaap ingeneem het."[29]

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between fact and fiction in "Fact(or) Fiction in Dominee Du Toit's Inscription of the White Queen into the Origin of African Civilisation—Notes on an Extract From *Di koningin fan Skeba*." *Alternation* 3.2 (1996): 130–47.

[28] Meyer further contends that the narrative is presented as a second coming, although Van Zyl questions this argument on the grounds that du Toit's stated views on religion contradict such a reading. Du Toit believed that Eden had been situated in Africa and he asserted a racial theory based on an interpretation of Africans as descendants of the Son of Ham. Van Zyl argues that Meyer is therefore on tenuous ground in arguing the notion of a second coming. For an elaboration of this argument, see Dorothea van Zyl, "Eeufeesviering van Afrikaans se eerste historiese roman [Centenary of the First Afrikaans Historical Novel]," *Stilet* 10.2 (1998): 23–42. Du Toit also regarded Bushmen people as the oldest inhabitants of Africa (*Di koningin fan Skeba* [Kaapstad: Africana Uitgewers, 1998] 45). Despite the disagreement between Van Zyl and Meyer, the argument surrounding the creation of a myth of white origin in Africa remains legitimate. Du Toit's life was scattered with contradictions as he wrestled with himself, and the inconsistencies in his world view do not necessarily preclude his intention to turn fiction into fact in *Di koningin fan Skeba*.

[29] Dorothea van Zyl ("Afrikaners reik uit") makes some interesting remarks about the way in which later Afrikaans writers such as Etienne van Heerden (in *Casspirs en Camparis*, 1991; translated as *Casspirs and Camparis*, 1993) and M.C. Botha (*Zambesi*,

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In the process of constructing his myth, Du Toit relies on his extensive knowledge of both mystical traditions.[30] Very early in the narrative, he establishes the authority of both mystical traditions, and displays a keen interest in supernatural occurrences so that he can show his readers that "[there is] indeed a supernatural world, and higher forces than the earthly ones" ("[daar] wel degelijk 'n bowennatuurlike wereld is, en hogere magte as net di stoffelike"—Du Toit, qtd in Nienaber, *Die eensame Ismael* 48–9). Van Zyl ("Nôi" 44) correctly notes that the acknowledgement of African magic

> spreek van 'n mate van versoening tussen die Eurosentriese en die Afrosentriese godsdiensopvatting in die roman, deurdat dit aandui dat S.J. du Toit ten minste ten dele iets substantieels in Afrika-magie gesien het.
>
> [speaks of a measure of reconciliation between the Eurocentric and the Afrocentric religious conceptions in the novel, in that it indicates that S.J. du Toit at least perceived something substantial in the magic of Africa.]

As a result of the lack of hard evidence to support his contentions, Du Toit fabricates reliable sources. As the travellers arrive near the ruins and set up camp, an *igqira*[31] suddenly appears. Right from the start, the power relations are clearly established as the *igqira* approaches crawling on his hands and feet (*Skeba* 2). After quelling his initial fears by offering him some food, Mr. du Toit asks the *igqira* about the origin of the ruins.[32] Initially, Umsalomi replies, "party sê die Molimo of Mosimo's [di-

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1988) have written back to *Di koningin fan Skeba* and return to the Zimbabwe ruins as a site for reconstructing Afrikaner identity during the 1980s.

[30] Du Toit's son and biographer, D.J. du Toit (Totius), comments on his father's extensive knowledge of African religion and customs (*Ds. S.J. du Toit in weg en werk* [Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1977] 322). See also Dorothea van Zyl, "Eeufeesviering" 31.

[31] Du Toit calls him a "towerdokter"—a witchdoctor. However, this is an inaccurate description, for Umsalomi is depicted as a diviner of truths (*Di koningin fan Skeba* 2–5) and as a healer (39). I have therefore opted for the use of the term *igqira*, which accurately reflects Umsalomi's powers, even though the term is isiXhosa and Umsalomi could not possibly be an umXhosa.

[32] For the sake of clarity, I refer to the author either as S.J. du Toit or simply Du Toit,

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Opperwese of di geeste fan di foorfaders] het dit gebou" (2—some say that the Molimo or Mosimos [the Supreme Being or the spirits of the ancestors] built it) and later he confirms that the oral tradition holds "dat hier eenmaal 'Abelanga' (witte mense) gewoon het met lange hare" (3—that once 'Abelanga' (white people) inhabited this area with long hair [sic]).

The igqira's authority is established through his traditional role as a preserver of history.[33] As a confidant of the chief, he is privy to secret knowledge, and when he speaks, he first establishes the authority of his oral narrative by indicating its genealogy:

> Myn fader het fer my fertel, dat myn fader syn fader hom fertel het, baing mane agteruit, meer dooie mane as ek kan sê.... En dis di waarhyd wat ek nou fer julle fertel het.
>
> [My father told me, that the father of my father told him, many moons back, more dead moons than I can tell ... And this is the truth that I have now told you.]

(*Skeba* 3)

Most of Umsalomi's predictions turn out to be true and his oral history is corroborated by the translations of the scrolls that the adventurers later find. In this way, Du Toit consciously constructs a mythology that can neither be verified nor disputed (Meyer, "Fact(or) Fiction" 130) and, through this undisputable history attempts to construct for himself a sense of belonging between the two worlds.

Although *tussenskap*, as defined by G.A. Jooste and Valerie Hanekom, is primarily used in relation to perceptions of selfhood in twentieth-century South Africa, it is, I suggest, possible to discern "prototypes" of the *tussenskapper*, the person who finds

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while all references to the fictional character are to Mr. du Toit, as this is what he is consistently called in the novel.

[33] See Jeff Opland, "Praise Poems As Historical Sources," *Beyond the Cape Frontier: Studies in the History of the Transkei and Ciskei*, ed. Christopher Saunders and Robin Derricourt (London: Longman, 1974. 1–38) for an assessment of the value of the oral tradition as an historical source.

her- or himself in a position of *tussenskap* in earlier writings. Such a person is not an *umhlanganisi*, one who successfully finds a sense of belonging in the interplay between two cultures, but remains a liminal figure struggling to establish a sense of belonging. In her critique of Dan Sleigh's novel, *Eilande* (Islands—2002), Helize van Vuuren embellishes the concept of the *tussenskapper* by projecting it onto historical characters—in this case, Koina woman, Krotoa (also called Eva by the Dutch) and her daughter, Pieternella.[34] Du Plooy argues that these two figures live in a "tussenwêreld," a space between two worlds, without feeling at home in either ("Tussenwêrelde: die nalatenskap van kolonialisme in Suid-Afrika"—Tussenskap: the legacy of Colonialism in South Africa). In Sleigh's novel, Krotoa is rejected by her own people, yet not fully accepted in the Dutch community, despite adopting a new name and converting to Christianity. In this, du Plooy argues, Krotoa is the essential interpreter: the mediator between groups who does not gain access to either one of the communities. Whereas for the twentieth-century *tussenskapper*—for instance Erwin in Etienne van Heerden's *Casspirs en Camparis* (1991, trans. *Casspirs and Camparis*, 1993)—the willingness to undergo change of lifestyle leads to a renewed sense of belonging in a new spiritual home, this is not the case for many historical figures, such as Krotoa and also, I suggest, for Mr. du Toit in *Di koningin fan Skeba*.

There are several reason for Mr. du Toit's failure to negotiate the transition to a renewed sense of belonging successfully despite his willingness to consider other world views. Unlike Ntsikana, who chooses to negotiate this space between cultures, and who as an *umhlanganisi*, does so for what he perceives to be the benefit of his people, the fictional Mr. du Toit acts out of self-interest. Also, where Ntsikana chose to negotiate the space between cultures, Mr. du Toit is forced into negotiating that space as a result of the pressures within his socio-political environment: he desires access to the European power structures, but at the same time he wants to legitimize his access to and control of the land in order to justify his expansionist and capitalist interests. He is acutely aware of African traditions, and of the way he can manipulate these condition to serve his own interests. As Hanekom and Jooste point out, the *tussenskapper* is not necessarily concerned with bringing about reconciliation between opposing traditions, but merely in carving out a workable space for him- or herself. However, Mr. du Toit is not yet a true *tussenskapper*, in that he does not show willingness to undergo a change of lifestyle ("Die tussenskap van Erwin" 57). Nonetheless, what Mr. du Toit does reveal is a shifting sense of belonging: he recognizes that he no longer belongs completely to Europe, but he is also not yet willing to accept completely that he is of Africa, either. What is lacking is a sense of commitment that can be traced back to the socio-political circumstances in South Africa during the late nineteenth century.

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[34] Krotoa became the most valuable interpreter between the Koina and the early Dutch settlers. She married the surgeon, Pieter van Meerhof.

S.J. du Toit, the author of *Di koningin fan Skeba*, was subject to the same Social Darwinist theories that influenced other European colonials. Consequently, despite his apparent awareness of African religious conceptions, he presents Africans in terms of the stereotypes of his time.[35] Although he relies implicitly on Umsalomi to provide mystical knowledge and to lead them to the hidden treasure, he cannot allow Umsalomi to be seen as the European's intellectual equal, and he therefore undermines Umsalomi's authority almost immediately after he has painstakingly established it in the eyes of his readers. When Umsalomi refuses to take them to the white queen's dwelling place, Henni, who is more sceptical of Umsalomi's abilities, calls his bluff by suggesting—falsely, of course—that they know the white queen (5). Umsalomi looks doubtful, but when Henni says "nou toe, jy is mos 'n dolosgooier. Fra nou fer jou dolosse, dan sal jy siin of dit ni waar is ni" (come on, you are a diviner. Ask your bones and then you will see whether it is true or not), the gullible Umsalomi feels compelled to throw the bones to save his reputation. The bones answer in the affirmative, thus confirming in the eyes of the reader that Umsalomi's magic is flawed and destroying his credibility.[36]

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[35] Dorothea van Zyl makes an interesting observation when she notes that the majority of the racist statements come from Henni, the inexperienced and rather ignorant youth who accompanies the travellers. The leader of the group, Mr. du Toit, presents a slightly more sympathetic view of the African ("Eeufeesviering" 31). Van Zyl suggests that S.J. du Toit's views reflect the Enlightenment view of the native, although there is a hint of Rousseau's noble savage and the Romantics (33). In many ways, du Toit's description of the Koranna *touleier* (wagon-leader) is more nuanced, since he is modelled on the real figure of the *touleier* that accompanied him on his expedition in 1894.

Paradoxically, du Toit undermines Umsalomi's credibility at the very moment he attempts to use his authority to provide the conclusive evidence of the white man's right to carve out an identity for himself in Africa. John Henderson Soga points out that amaXhosa identity is constructed through the ancestors (*The AmaXosa* 151), and Chris Mann notes that the shades of the ancestors inhabit the living ("Towards a Perception of the Shades" 31–33). Immediately after throwing the bones, Umsalomi utters a cry of surprise, saying:

> "Di Molimos (geeste fan die afgesterwe oue mense) léwe in di Abelanga." Ons fra fer hom, waarin hy dit siin. Hy sê, ons moet oplet dat al die dolosse lê met hulle koppe na ons toe…
>
> ["The Molimos (spirits of the deceased ancestors) live in the Abelanga."[37] We asked him how he saw that. He said that we should take note of how all the bones were lying with their heads towards us…]
>
> (*Skeba* 5–6)

After dismissing the power of the bones, Du Toit wants his reader to reverse the disbelief he has so carefully constructed in his narrative and once more accept the authority of the bones so that he can confirm that the spirits of the African ancestors dwell in the white man—that his identity is undeniably entwined with that of the African.[38] Du Toit's

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[36] In *The African Colony: Studies in the Reconstruction* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1903) 13, John Buchan describes the abilities of the *igqira* in terms that closely resemble those used by du Toit. For instance, both present the diviner as a careful student of his environment and as reliant on careful guesswork.

[37] Du Toit consistently uses "abelanga" rather than the accepted spelling "abelungu."

[38] The implicit acceptance of the truth spoken by the diviner's bones is again reflected in Joubert Reitz's novel, *Die dolos gooier* [The Thrower of Bones] (Cape Town: Nasionale

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perceptive attempt to construct identity in the liminal space between "Eurocentric and the Afrocentric religious conceptions" (Van Zyl, "Nôi" 44), is therefore scuppered by his insistent adherence to the dominant racial stereotypes of his time.

Du Toit's attempt at walking the tightrope between Europe and Africa, like that of Gqoba and other nineteenth-century Xhosa writers, was aimed in part at gaining access to the structures of colonial power, which were controlled by the British Settlers. Yet, despite the strong economic ties these settlers had with Britain, the construction of an English identity in South Africa was not determined entirely by events in Europe, and many English writers revealed an ambivalence to the machinations of colonialism in their work. In *Rereading the Imperial Romance*, Laura Chrisman shows how Rider Haggard manages to manipulate fact and fiction in such a way that he criticizes colonialism while simultaneously reinforcing and upholding it (99–119). Thus, for Haggard, the death of the African is necessary to allow the development of the "greater good" of colonialism. Foutala's death in *King Solomon's Mines* (1886) signifies the ultimate commodification of the African body: it removes the stigma of imperial capital, and, as Chrisman points out, "neatly exchanges an imperial threat (miscegenation) for an affirmation (symbolic; eternal devotion of a submissive Africa to her master)" (Chrisman 56). It is through this commodification that Haggard is able to contain the African and create a space for European expansionism.

Whereas Haggard indicates the way in which the metropolitan subject is bruised and battered by his exposure to the African continent, and is consequently left with a sense of moral ambiguity, Olive Schreiner offers a viable alternative. In *Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, Schreiner actively engages the metropolis in her criticism of British expansionism under Rhodes's Charter Company. Peter Halket the trooper is no different from Peter Halket the trader in the way he exploits the African body. What is required is a change in the colonial mindset; the result will be not only a changed perception of selfhood, but also a more favourable attitude to Africans.

Pers, 1916).

If Britain and an equally complacent colonial elite took the outward trappings of stability—a Parliament and the potential material wealth of the African interior—as a starting point for reinventing themselves, Schreiner fully intended to unsettle that sense of complacency. In calling Schreiner's attempts to reconstruct Victorian identity a "reinvention," I use the word, as André Brink does in Re*inventing a Continent*, to signify a return to an etymological origin where to discover and to invent were used interchangeably (230). To discover a continent, Brink notes, is therefore also to invent it. Since Europeans were already on the African continent and had, in many instances, already rooted themselves in this continent, one cannot really speak of "inventing" an identity for themselves, but one should speak, more correctly, of "reinventing" it or refashioning it. Refashioning with its transitory implications (which resonate with the transitory elements of *tussenskap*), is therefore a more accurate term to use in this context, for, as Laura Chrisman notes, there were significant differences in the way colonials and metropolitan Victorians constituted their respective senses of being and belonging, and Schreiner was determined to publicize this difference by establishing a different set of values for the formation of a sense of belonging in Africa (*Rereading* 4–5). There was nothing new about the political environment she inhabited and explored in her first novel, *The Story of an African Farm* (1888), for as Stephen Gray notes,

> by the time of Schreiner and her *Story of an African Farm*, the introductory phases of the colonial search for a settled society were complete. Schreiner's main character, Waldo, is not a settler, but the son of a settler. Her Lyndall and Em are the stranded children of British parents who either passed in the night or died young, wrestling a young country, and they are born into and brought up in the most settled matrix of Afrikanerdom, the agrarian establishment, supposedly rooted there since time immemorial, resistant to change, isolated and a complete world unto itself. (*Southern African Literature* 139)

In Schreiner's Eastern Cape, it is the Afrikaners who, like the Hottentot and Xhosa servants that appear from time to time along the periphery of the narrative, seem to be an indelible part of the landscape.[39] While contemporary Afrikaans and isiXhosa writers were looking for ways to access the mechanisms of colonial power in order to manifest the terms of their belonging and identity in concrete terms, Schreiner takes it for granted that they belong. For her, it is the two English children, Lyndall and Em, who are the displaced ones; they are the ones who, like Waldo, the son of a German immigrant, still have to determine what it is that drives their sense of belonging in this land into which they were born.

It is Waldo, the English-speaking son of a German immigrant, who wrestles most passionately to find terms of belonging in a land that seems hostile to him, but from which he has no means of escape. From the beginning, when he prostrates himself before the God of the Old Testament and confesses, to when he sits down to write his letters to Lyndall by candlelight (another form of confession), Waldo struggles to find a language in which to present his thoughts, and through these thoughts, to find a place to belong.

At first, Waldo tries to express his belonging in concrete ways by offering a sacrifice to God. When God does not respond, he rejects the God of the Old Testament, saying, "I love Jesus Christ, but I hate God" (*African Farm* 36). When his attempt at communication with a Higher Being fails, he tries to establish the terms of belonging in more concrete terms: he designs a machine that will shear sheep. For Waldo, it is first and foremost the achievement of creating something that is both beautiful and useful that is enthralling.[40] Yet, in a community where sheep-farming has become the basis of almost every industry in the region, such a machine is a prescient invention, for once in production, it will assure him of immortality in the minds of subsequent generations; but the machine will also provide him with the financial independence he needs to get away from what he perceives as the stifling environment of the farm. However, Bonaparte Blenkins, the insidious drifter who becomes the farm manager, destroys his invention. The destruction of the machine is, in its own way, also a sacrifice: Blenkins "offers" the machine—Waldo's key to alternative means of production that lie beyond farm—to the African soil as he crushes it into the ground, along with the young boy's spirit of adventure (99).

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[39] The fact that these people exist on the "periphery" of Schreiner's world does not necessarily mean that she regards them as unimportant. Speaking specifically about Tant Sannie's Hottentot servant, Malvern van Wyk Smith notes,

> Nor is the "Kaffir…at the foot of the koppie" the only reminder that, *pace* Dan Jacobson and many another sociopolitical critic of the novel, the "black people [in the novel] are [*not*] merely extras, supernumerates, part of the background" (*Story* 21)—part of the background, yes, but a background so powerful and resonant that it becomes the deep ground of the novel. ("Napoleon and the Giant: Discursive Conflicts in Olive Schreiner's 'Story of an African Farm'," *Ariel* 30.1 [1999]: 159)

When Waldo discovers the attic full of books and takes pleasure in the knowledge that even though he does not understand everything he reads, he can nonetheless own the thoughts that the words provoke in his mind (101), Bonaparte Blenkins destroys the books. For Waldo, none of the traditional ways of establishing a sense of being and belonging can be valid. Any concrete manifestation of his sense of belonging, it seems, is doomed to failure as Bonaparte Blenkins denies him access to any of them.

Waldo's efforts at establishing a sense of belonging through such concrete manifestations of his desire have their parallel in Christ's sacrifice, which rendered the ritual sacrifices required under the Old Testament dispensation obsolete. Christ's sacrifice heralded the advent of a new dispensation, just as Waldo's failed attempts herald the need for a redefinition of the terms upon which subsequent generations can belong in South Africa.

Towards the end of the novel, Waldo sits at night writing letters to Lyndall—letters he knows implicitly she will never read. The act of writing becomes a silent manifestation of his growing awareness of a sense of belonging. In the letters, we hear of his life as a transport rider, a wanderer, and an outsider, who transports the new forms of material wealth from the European metropolis into the African interior; however, even beyond the confines of the farm, Waldo is denied access to the means of production. As Waldo journeys back from the interior to go and collect another wagonload of goods, his thoughts turn inward. The interior landscape of his soul and the African interior collide in the moment he first sets his eyes on the sea. This is a crucial moment, for unlike the previous generation of settlers who approached the country from the outside and gazed in at the African interior, Waldo's first look is outward towards the "blue, monotonous mountain":

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[40] In this way, the construction of the machine resonates with both the Bushman paintings and with the wood carving Waldo is making when he meets the stranger.

> I walked looking at it, but I was thinking of the sea I wanted to see. At last I wondered what that curious blue thing might be; then it struck me it was the sea! I would have turned back again, only I was too tired. I wonder if all the things we want to see—the churches, the pictures, the men in Europe—will disappoint us so! …I got to the beach in that afternoon, and I saw the water run up and down the sand, and I saw the foam breakers; they were pretty, but I thought I would go back the next day. It was not my sea. (241)

Despite his intention to return to the farm the following day, Waldo remains drawn to the sea and returns for several days, staring at the ocean. Yet in the end he writes, "I went back to Grahamstown" (242). Looking across the sea at that distant stranger, Europe, Waldo gazes back at the metropolis and finds it lacking: it is disappointing and does not foster any sense of belonging in him. He therefore turns his back on the sea and returns to the farm: it is here, on African soil, that he must continue to establish his sense of belonging.

Back on the farm, Waldo himself becomes a sacrificial offering when, at the end of the novel, the chickens peck at the food around his dead body (281). He leaves behind only his letters, and in the end it is only through these letters and the words contained in them that we, the readers from subsequent generations, can reconstruct the terms on which Waldo eventually becomes part of the African soil. Waldo, with his tangled philosophies still struggling to find expression, knows only that this is where he belongs. How, on what terms, and in what language he will eventually assert his sense of belonging, he does not yet know; he only knows that he will.

How Waldo arrives at this point becomes clear in a series of parallel scenes that mirror, duplicate and extend each other.[41] Even as he attempts to perfect his machine, or to understand the books he reads, Waldo continues to question and search for alternatives that lie beyond concrete reality. When he goes to announce the arrival of Bonaparte Blenkins to the two girls sitting on the kopje (40–42), he finds them with their backs to the Bushman painting. The girls are not immediately interested in the painting behind them, and Lyndall tells of her admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte. It is Waldo who draws their attention back to the African soil that surrounds them and fixes their gaze on the art behind their backs: this kopje, he suggests, could provide answers to the many questions the children have. The kopje, he knows implicitly, will be able to tell why they are here, why and how they belong. And the kopje does speak—through the "strange things, that make us laugh" (42), the paintings that have been preserved on the surfaces of its rocks. Waldo does not understand these paintings, but he knows that he is drawn to them, for he is certain that they contain the answers to his many questions.

Waldo's remark that the Bushman "did not know why [he painted], but he wanted to make something beautiful," points to the meeting with the stranger in the second part of novel.[42] The stranger finds Waldo in the process of carving a piece of art

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[41] In "Discursive Conflicts," Van Wyk Smith comments on the various forms of duplication that occur. He argues that the discursive strategies show how Schreiner constantly inverts her own arguments, revealing the ambivalence in her own epistemology.

[42] Schreiner's interrogation of the Bushman paintings and Waldo's reading of these paintings get taken up by later writers. Sarah Gertrude Millin, in counterpoint to Waldo's vision of beauty embedded in the paintings, and in rejecting the radical potential embedded in Schreiner's Bushmen, writes:

> And what must the Lord go and do (in fun, or whim, or irony, or heavy moral lesson) but make of the little wizened, clicking croaking Bushmen the artists of Africa! There they were, with their hollow cheeks and hollow backs and flat faces and sharp little shallow eyes; with their women whose big behinds the Hottentot women had from them, that made them look as if they were about to become

Cont next page….

onto wood. The figures, the stranger observes, "were almost grotesque in their laboured resemblance to nature" (146)—not that different, perhaps, from the "strange things" painted by the "small and … ugly" Bushmen (42). Like the Bushmen, Waldo also does not fully understand what he creates, but he nonetheless attempts to interpret the pictures to the stranger by telling the story of the Hunter and the Bird. What is striking about this tale is not only the symbolic search for Truth, but also the way in which Schreiner hints at "[t]he easy intercourse between the living and the dead [that] forms an integral part of African oral traditions in languages like Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho" (André Brink, "Interrogating Silence" 26).[43] In his story, the hunter passes almost effortlessly between the worlds of the living and the dead. Waldo had already suggested this interplay earlier, when he said to Lyndall and Em, "I know that it is I who am thinking…but it seems as if it were [the Bushmen] who were talking" (42). In these moments where he points, consciously and unconsciously, to the potential embedded in alternative means of expression, Waldo comes close to finding a site in which to define his sense of belonging: in his piece of art and the oral narrative he shapes around it, he unconsciously melds and adapts two ancient African traditions. He is becoming *umhlanganisi*, the one who brings together these worlds. The girls do not understand.

Kanti. And yet. The isiXhosa is so much more suggestive: *Kanti*. In the end, it is Lyndall, the one who emphatically denies that she has ever experienced this interplay between the living and the dead, who extends this possibility in the story she tells Gregory Rose in the second part of the novel.

As Waldo contemplates the mysteries of the past on the koppie in an earlier episode in the novel, he remarks, "When I was little…I thought a great giant was buried

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> centaurs—there they were, so grotesque in being and fate, and in them was the rage to express beauty. (*King of the Bastards* 11)

[43] Brink's concern is with the way this relationship plays out in Afrikaans fiction—a theme, he contends, that finds its best example in *Toorberg*, "with its deceptive interweaving of the living and the dead, of past and present" ("Interrogating Silence" 26).

under there" (42). Malvern van Wyk Smith suggests several possible candidates for taking up the honour of being the giant Schreiner envisages, "all resonating ironically with Lyndall's admiration for another 'giant'—Napoleon" ("Discursive Conflicts" 156). The first, and most obvious is Adamastor; the second is Antaeus, the "son of Poseidon and Ge, Sea and Earth, also associated with Africa, who derived his strength from his contact with his mother earth" (157). This is an intriguing possibility, but no less so than the third possibility he suggests: Lyndall's "Kaffir." When Gregory Rose encounters Lyndall at the koppie, she mockingly starts to tell him a story. The story not only imitates the apparent ease with which she spoke to Waldo, but also echoes their past discussions thematically:

> There at the foot of the "kopje" goes a Kaffir; he has nothing on but a blanket; he is a splendid fellow—six feet high, with a magnificent pair of legs. In his leather bag he is going to fetch his rations, and I suppose to kick his wife with his beautiful legs when he gets home. He has a right to; he bought her for two oxen. There is a lean dog going after him, to whom I suppose he never gives more than a bone from which he has sucked the marrow; but his dog loves him; as his wife does. (213)

Gregory Rose, the apparent paragon of enlightened values and colonial sophistication, rises to her taunt, little realising that Lyndall's tale is drawn as much from fantasy as it is from her description of the "Kaffir herd" who appears behind him. Just as Waldo was the one who looked past the girls at the koppie to focus on the Bushmen paintings in the earlier parallel scene, Lyndall here looks past Gregory Rose at this living manifestation of the African past: the man, dressed in his blanket, is clearly an *umqaba*, a traditionalist. He is, as Smith suggests, "a powerful metonym of all the vanished precolonial inhabitants of the farm, but his physical magnificence turns him into a living representative of the Adamastor-Antaeus figure" ("Discursive Conflicts" 158). The conflation of Graeco-Roman mythology and the African herder reflects the way in which Waldo combined and adapted the narrative traditions of the Bushmen and the amaXhosa. Through Lyndall's vision, Schreiner suggests once more the possibility of merging two worlds: although the man is dressed in traditional garb, he relies on the rations provided by his colonial masters. Not unlike Gqoba's educated African, Lyndall's "Kaffir" finds himself caught in the transition between two worlds. Lyndall now acknowledges the interplay that exists between different worlds, between the past and the future, between the living and the dead, for the man "wakes thoughts that run far out into the future and back into the past" (213).

The umXhosa's existence in a liminal, transitional space gains additional significance when we consider how his approach to the koppie mirrors Waldo's approach:

> At this instant there appeared at the foot of the 'kopje' two figures—the one, a dog, white and sleek, one yellow ear hanging down over his left eye; the other, his master, a lad of fourteen, and no other than the boy Waldo, grown into a heavy, slouching youth of fourteen. … He wore an aged jacket much too large for him, and rolled up at the wrists, as of old, a pair of dilapidated 'velschoens' and a felt hat. (39)

Waldo's appearance reflects a curious mix of items picked almost at random: his felt hat, in imitation of European gentry, is offset by a jacket and a pair of "velschoens," an item of clothing that has become synonymous with Boer identity; he looks like an urchin in his oversized jacket that hangs on him, creating a striking correspondence between his baggy attire and that of the "Kaffir herd" in Lyndall's story. The young Waldo is a heavy youth, and his slouching posture suggests not only his broken spirit, but also an unwieldy size: he appears to be morphing into a "giant" of sorts. The dog, Doss, who later accompanies the umXhosa "giant," becomes a concrete link between the two men: in both instances, the ownership of the dog is attributed to the figure that is described. They are linked through their joint ownership of the dog as much as through their physical presence. Like the "Kaffir herd," Waldo exists at a point of confluence where several traditions flow into one. Both men embody the ancestral spirits that wander alongside the living, informing their choices. In the confluence of the different traditions they carry on their bodies, they are *abahlanganisi*.[44]

Schreiner does not claim a complete understanding of what she sees; she merely presents a picture and offers possibilities for interpretation: Waldo and the African giant both reflect the strange interplay between the living and the dead, between the cultural traditions of Europe and Africa. They are giants that are slowly waking. Schreiner does not know what her waking giants will become; she recognizes her inability at this point to understand and interpret the movements of this giant. Yet, she insists, the failure to imagine the nature of the beast does not mean that it should be ignored.

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[44] *Abahlanganisi* is the plural form of *umhlanganisi*.

The conflation of Waldo and Lyndall's "Kaffir herd" into the single image of waking giant calls to mind once more the potential of *ukuhlangana* as a term for describing identity-formation in nineteenth-century South Africa: Waldo's clothing is a purposeful bringing together of apparent opposites, an assemblage of items that serve as protective armour to ward off any unwanted intrusion into his very privately-felt sense of belonging.

Unfortunately, the political developments of the day did not raise confidence in Schreiner's vision of a morphing giant. *The Story of an African Farm* appeared at an important juncture in South African social and political life: the discovery of gold on the Rand had refuelled the demand for migrant labour and with the completion of the Kimberley railway line in 1885, the relatively secluded world of Schreiner's Karoo was fast disappearing. In 1887, in what was to become the first of a series of legislative attempts to control the supply of migrant labour to the mines, the Cape Parliament passed the Parliamentary Voters' Registration Act, which limited African voting rights. In 1888, Cecil John Rhodes acquired control of all the mines in Kimberley and 1890, he became prime minister of the Cape Colony. The development of a mining economy contributed to the move away from a class-based political structure in the Cape to one that was based primarily on race.

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A crucial point in the development of segregationist thought in South Africa was the introduction of the Glen Grey Act in 1894. The Act was the brainchild of Cecil John Rhodes, who had entered politics by using his financial position to gain political clout. In its essence, the Act created a land shortage among Africans: by drastically curtailing African freehold rights in the Cape Colony, and making farming uneconomical, it forced the landless Africans into a wage market that was spear-headed by the mining industry. Much of the segregationist philosophy that dominated the twentieth century relied on the white man's growing fear of being swamped by the increasing number of urban Africans, and drew on the social and political developments following the Glen Grey Act. By the late nineteenth century, the liberal tradition at the Cape had fostered a clearly defined group of Africans who identified themselves broadly with British colonial values. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, the increasing demand for African labour on the mines, the South African War of 1899–1902, and the increasing racialisation of political discourse had put a strain on the relationship between the English and the African intelligentsia. The conclusion of the war left South African society in a state of disrepair. The socio-political relations that had existed before the war were no longer valid, and in the face of the colonial government's conscious efforts to reconcile Boers and British, Africans realised that their concerns would be even further marginalized. In the period leading up to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, Africans therefore concentrated their political energy on developing a united front against the erosion of the limited rights Africans did possess.

Despite the efforts of Alfred Milner's government to smooth over the tensions in white South African society, the immediate effects of the war could not be erased by the stroke of a legislative pen. The Afrikaners, who before the war had developed a fairly amicable working relationship between the landed and the landless, were left more stratified than ever: what co-operation had existed between the landed and the landless in the old Boer Republics had made way for a more exploitative relationship, of which one desperate Afrikaner wrote in 1905, "These selfish, self-righteous bloodsuckers! …Even our great generals who make such fine speeches, oppress the poor in private and enrich themselves from the impoverished." If this continued, the writer noted, there would be two classes: "the rich and the desperately poor: the bosses and the white kaffirs" (qtd in Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation" 101). Isabel Hofmeyr also notes that in the Eastern Cape community of Ugie, Afrikaans communities were racially mixed. Such racial integration was not limited to select communities, for in Johannesburg there were a number of multiracial Zionist Churches,[45] and it would require conscious intervention to stop the racial integration of Afrikaner society. There were many Afrikaans writers who were both willing and able to take up this task. Gustav Preller, a newspaperman, wrote a series of articles promoting the Afrikaans language and linking the struggle for recognition of the language to the recognition of Afrikaners as a distinct group.[46]

Preller's work emphasised the link between Afrikaans and Dutch and this, Hofmeyr notes, gave the language "an entry via Dutch into that font of civilisation, the Graeco-Roman tradition" ("Building a Nation" 105). In effect, the ideologues of the Second Language Movement were trying to reverse what C.P. Hoogenhout and S.J. du Toit had attempted with the First Afrikaans Movement in the previous century. The work of the earlier writers had not been in vain, though, for now that they had established the Afrikaner's link to the land, the Afrikaner could still sustain that link while re-establishing his link with the European metropolis, thus in effect giving the Afrikaner the best of both worlds. In seeking to establish their identity in the undefined space between Europe and Africa, the Afrikaners occupied a position similar to that of the African elite, despite the fact that they were employing this space in radically divergent ways.

The relationship with Europe was of crucial importance to many of the new generation of writers, particularly to immigrant writers like Adriaan Francken, a teacher at Grey College in Bloemfontein. Francken had been born and educated in The Netherlands, but after coming to South Africa, he seemed particularly keen to become part of the emergent Afrikaner cultural awakening. His play, *Susanna Reyniers: 'n*

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[45] See B. Sundlker, *Zulu Zion and Some Swazi Zionists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) 13–67, for an account of these Zionist churches. For a discussion on the hermeneutics and history of Zionist Churches, see Allan Anderson, "African Initiated Church Hermeneutics," *Initiation into Theology: the Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics*, ed. Simon Maimela and Adrio König (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1998) 399–416.

[46] The information in this paragraph has been drawn from Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnicity, 1902–1924," Marks and Trapido 95–123.

Blijspel (Susanna Reyniers: A Comedy), reflects the attempts to show "the movement from a Dutch to an Afrikaans identity" (Carli Coetzee, "Early Afrikaans Theatre"). The play draws upon the diaries of Jan van Riebeeck, the leader of the small group of colonists charged by the Dutch East India Company with establishing a halfway station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652.[47] Throughout his time as governor of the colony, Van Riebeeck kept a detailed official diary—which is what Francken claims to have used as a source for his play. Carli Coetzee notes some of the significant omissions and alterations Francken made to the original material, despite the fact that the author notes that "De kleur van de origineel is bewaard in verscheiden woorden en uitdrukkingen, die letterlik zijn overgenomen" (The colour of the original has been maintained in [the use of] several words and expressions, which are taken over literally, *Susanna Reyniers* 7). Significantly, he then notes that he has attempted to reflect the "verschillende vormen van het Hollands zoals dit nu in Zuid-Afrika zijn bespoken" (different forms of Dutch as it is now spoken in South Africa). As Coetzee points out, "while the play aims to remain true to the 'colour' of the original text (Van Riebeeck's journal), it also tries to reflect (and reflect on) current language practices" ("Early Afrikaans Theatre"). Francken comments that the diversity of the language, both in register and in the construction of the racial profile of its users, made it difficult to speak of Afrikaans literature or language—for, like Gustav Preller, he argued that the recognition of Afrikaans as a fully-fledged language would require the conscious intervention of Dutch. For Francken, Afrikaans could only claim recognition as a language through Dutch—in other words, by establishing its credentials through Europe.[48]

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[47] This was the first permanent European settlement on the southern tip of Africa. Previous attempts at settlement had failed, despite the fact that European sailors had traversed the coastline for almost 150 years.

[48] It is interesting to note, as an aside, that although the play was written in Afrikaans, the introduction was written in Dutch. Afrikaans, it appears, was at this point suitable as a language of entertainment, but intellectual work required the use of a European language.

In the play, Susanna Reyniers escapes from an intended marriage to Nikolaas Fortuyn (Nicholas Fortune) and sails to the Cape, where she eventually meets up with her true love, Herman Ernst. Coetzee presents a convincing argument to show how Susanna's cross-dressing and her journey from Europe, through Cape society and ultimately into the African hinterland, represents her journey from a Dutch identity to an Afrikaans one.

Coetzee also points out that the cast list of the first edition is carefully structured to reflect three distinct sets of characters: the ship's captain, the merchants and three women who live in Amsterdam, including Susanna Reyniers, the eldest daughter of the Amsterdam merchant, Jan Reyniers; a group of Europeans who live at the Cape; and finally, the slaves and Hottentots. This third set of characters is especially important for the way in which Francken constructs identity through the play. In the cast list, the Hottentots are presented as follows:

> OEDASOA en GOGOSOA, Hotnot Kapteins
>
> Eva, "Tolkin"—dienstmeid bij Mevr. Van Riebeeck
>
> Adoons en Platneus, slawe
>
> [OEDASOA en GOGOSOA, Hottentot Captains
>
> Eva, "Interpreter"—Servant girl to Mrs van Riebeeck
>
> Adoons[49] and Flatnose, slaves]

As Coetzee points out, these characters merely form the backdrop to the play and, in many ways, they "represent" the Cape.[50] Calling on earlier Dutch narratives, Francken presents an image of the Hottentots as lazy and indolent. The innkeeper, Jannetje Boddys, offers the first comments on the Hottentots:

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[49] Adoons is also the name of T.O. Honiball's popular early Afrikaans cartoon character, an anthropomorphized baboon.

[50] It is also worth noting that Krotoa, the interpreter (here called by her western name, Eva) and wife of the colonial surgeon, Pieter van Meerhof, is here reduced to the position of servant.

> Kijk zo'n boel, hoe lê al's weer rond en bond! (Zij zet s'n stoel oo'rend) Adoons! ADOONS!! Waar zit die schepsel nou weer? Dit lijk ver mij hij word met die dag luier en onverschilliger. Adoons!!
>
> [Look at the lot, how everything is lying about! (She sets the chair straight) Adoons! ADOONS!! Where is that creature lazing this time? It seems to me he gets lazier and more reckless by the day. Adoons!!]
>
> (*Susanna Reyniers* 43)

There is irony in the striking similarity between this description of the Hottentots and the way in which the Boers themselves were seen by the English through the eyes of John Barrow, who saw the Boers as "living almost entirely in the society of Hottentots."[51] It is the way in which Barrow's remark highlights the confluence of Afrikaner and Hottentot lifestyles that Francken works against as he consciously distances the Afrikaner from the Hottentot who, in the nineteenth century, had been inextricably identified with the Afrikaner by such writers as Pringle and Bain.

Although both the Afrikaners and the Hottentots had shared a common language, (white) Afrikaners now consciously worked against their historical association with the Hottentots. In *Susanna Reyniers*, the Hottentots seldom speak, and when they do, it is in gibberish (here taken to mean unintelligible sounds, as opposed to "gibberish" as a term describing Afrikaans) that subsequently has to be translated into terms that are understandable to the Europeans and that reflect "European expectations and values" (Coetzee, "Early Afrikaans Theatre"). By deliberately outlining a progression from "Europe" to "Africa," Francken's Afrikaners become more "European" while at the same time laying claim to Africa by assuming/consuming the African identity that was imposed on them by the British—the very identity which the Hottentots come to represent. Having themselves been seen in the same terms as the Hottentots, the white Afrikaners now dissociate themselves from this identity by offering the Hottentot as a parody of their own language and over-emphasising their own European heritage through the linguistic link of the Dutch language. The Hottentots in the play therefore represent both that which the Afrikaner resists/abhors and what s/he most desires to become. Afrikaner identity had come almost full circle since Hendrik Bibault's famous statement "Ik ben Afrikaander" little more than a century earlier. The complex identity that tried to find expression in the liminal space between Europe and Africa had made way for a racialised identity that sought to deny the role and presence of that "other," the Hottentot, who initially provided access to the very African identity Afrikaners had appropriated.

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[51] Barrow's description of the Boers in turn reminds one of the descriptions of black Africans in later colonial writings.

Whereas writing in Afrikaans was overtly political, the political nature of isiXhosa writing is less obvious. Jeff Opland notes that "as a consequence of the politics and economics of publishing, Xhosa books, with very few exceptions, avoid sensitive political issues, are in conformity with a Christian ethic, reflect western literary sensibilities, and are suitable for reading by children" ("Transition" 136). In contrast, however, Sizwe Satyo argues that Xhosa writing

> has continued[,] since 1886, to be a means of attacking social disintegration and moral decay and has served as a vehicle of exposing the dilemma of a people who find themselves at the cross-roads resulting from acculturation. ("Aspects of Xhosa Fiction" 80)

Together, Satyo and Opland reveal the quintessential tension that exists in Xhosa writing: the missionaries who controlled the Xhosa publishing industry would not publish any material they did not find suitable; the Xhosa writers used the act of writing as an extension of the traditional *instsomi*, or folktale, in which the narrator or poet was also "a social critic who represents his community's collective conscience" (Ntantala, qtd in Satyo, "Traditional Concepts" 36). From the very beginning, therefore, Xhosa writers worked to find ways in which to circumvent the critical gaze of the missionary presses and to incorporate social criticism into their works, thus making them politically relevant to their times.

The first Xhosa novel, H.M. Ndawo's *uHambo lukaGqobhoka* (Gqobhoka's Journey / The Convert's Journey,[52] 1909),[53] completed the transition from a purely oral literary tradition and heralded the arrival of "a new era in the history of Xhosa literature, the era of the literary book" (Opland, "Transition" 148), and the content and structure of the novel reflect this moment of transition accurately. It is the story of Gqobhoka's journey from heathenism to Christianity and can be seen as a transposition of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) into an African setting—without the depth of allegorical representation provided by the original. Nonetheless, it is an original work and it offers useful insight into the way in which many Africans formulated their identity at the turn of the century. The first few pages of the novel comprise a detailed description of life about a traditional homestead. At the end of this lengthy piece of ethnographic description, the narrator says,

> Iinto ebezisenziwa kwikhaya lam lasempumalanga andingezifezi ukuzibalisa apha nam kwathini. Zininzi izinto ebezisenziwa, ezenze

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[52] The name, Gqobhoka, means "to be pierced through" or "to be converted." The early Christian converts became known as *amagqobhoka*. The people who were not converted and continued to practice traditional religion were known as *amaqaba* from the traditional practice of *ukuqaba imbola*, "to paint red." It is because of the ochre paint that adorned their bodies and that stained their blankets that the term "Red Blanket" also came to represent traditional amaXhosa.

[53] Whether *uHambo lukaGqobhoka* is in fact the first novel to appear in isiXhosa is contentious. Lovedale records and various literary histories note that S.E.K. Mqhayi's *u-Samson* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1907) had appeared before Ndawo's book. It is described as a retelling of the story of Samson and Delilah in an African setting and is therefore not considered as a wholly new creative work.

My thanks to Teresa Zackodnik for pointing out the possibility of exploring the relationship between these two texts further: why is it that Ndawo's book, a transposition of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, is a creative work in its own right, whereas Mqhayi's retelling of the story of Samson and Delilah is not? Furthermore, how does this judgement fit within the context of a politics of imitation and a politicized denigration of imitation such as that practised by Tyali and Ntsikana, and also by Mqhayi in *Ityala lamawele*? Unfortunately, as there are no known extant copies of *u-Samson*, this discussion is, for now, moot.

> ukuba ikhaya lam elo lixabiseke kum kunesixeko esakhiwe ngamatye anqabileyo.
>
> [It is not possible for me to describe everything that went on at my home on the eastside. There are many things that often took place that made my home more precious to me than a city built with rare stones.]
>
> (*uHambo* 4)[54]

The author's remarks suggest the importance of such description for maintaining the author's sense of belonging, but also his inability to continue engaging in description of this nature. While this is clearly an attempt to end the lengthy digression and get ahead with the narrative of Gqobhoka's adventures, it also reflects a muted protest against the institutions of power that actively discouraged the preservation of African traditions. In the end, Gqobhoka turns his back on the perceived sins of his old lifestyle and ventures on his journey towards Christianity.[55] However, Ndawo's authorial interjections in the first Xhosa novel hint at the subversive potential of literature as the author voices a subtle protest against missionary intervention in Xhosa literature.[56]

When Ndawo resorts to ethnographic description, it becomes a means of re-inscribing his identity, a way of "resurrecting our ancestral forebears" (Tiyo Soga, qtd in Opland "Xhosa Literature in Newspapers" 119), rather than an outright imitation of the examples set by early European writers. For Ndawo, ethnographic description is an important part of constructing a new sense of identity as well as a vehicle for the preservation of the past. The act of writing therefore extends the traditional function of literature, and writing a story constitutes a performance of individual and communal subjectivity in a way that would ordinarily be denied or discouraged by the institutions of power.

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[54] Trans. by Khanyile Jezi, Sikhumbuzo Maqubela and Peter Midgley.

[55] Hodgson notes that the first converts cast off traditional ways and were forced to leave their communities thus causing a rift in the community. The new converts rejected wholesale all traditional practices and embraced the Christian lifestyle with enthusiasm (*Ntsikana's Great Hymn* 13). Pauw, in his seminal study of Xhosa religious practices, notes that first-generation Christians "tended to a more complete renunciation of the ancestor cult than present-day members of the orthodox churches" (*Christianity and Xhosa Tradition* [Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1975] 207).

[56] As many Xhosa authors were to discover, any controversial material either had to be excised, or else the Lovedale Press refused to publish the book. See Jeff Peires, "Literature for the Bantu revisited" for a detailed account of the Lovedale Press's editorial interference in Xhosa literature.

In the opening pages, Ndawo presents an image of an integrated community in which every person performs a clearly defined function and the narrator remarks that "ilizwe limoya mhle ukuthabathela endalweni kude kuphathelele emntwini" (we were at peace within our society and our environment—*uHambo lukaGqobhoka* 3). Within this integrated community, festivals in honour of the ancestors played an important role, for

> Besinqula amathongo, into leyo ebitsho yabetha labukeka ilizwe nendalo ekulo. Umntu ofayo ebecelelwa intsikelelokwiminyanya yakowabo, kutaruziswe ngebhokhwe nokuba kungenkabi yenkomo. Bekusithi ukuba iminyanya ibuye ngetaru asinde lowo ubesifa, kodwa ukuba ixabene imyekelele afe.Ukufa yeyona nto ibisothusa, bekusala nokuba umntu ukusiphi na isiyolo, akuva umphanga asuke awe adangale, oyike, le nto isuke ibaleke ize engondweni yakhe, imalathise okokuba nave ngomso wofa.
>
> [We worshipped ancestral spirits (literally: we worshipped our dreams), and this made the universe and the creation within it meaningful to us. Prayers of forgiveness for the dying would be communicated to the *iminyanya* by sacrificing a goat or an ox. If the ancestors were kind that person would be saved, but if they felt aggrieved, they would let him die. We truly feared death and news of someone's death would tear us, petrified, from our revels, as we pondered the possibility of our own imminent deaths.]
>
> (*uHambo lukaGqobhoka* 4)

Within a traditional amaXhosa world view, the ancestors often visit the living in dreams, and religious practice and secular activity become inseparable. An individual's actions, in many ways, controlled his fate: if he had for some reason annoyed the ancestors, he risked their displeasure, for "ancestrally sent misfortune is regarded as being a punishment for wrong doing" (Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa* 32). The Xhosa "had no myth of primordial death" (36) in the way that, within a Christian mythology, the fall from grace in the Garden of Eden brought death to mankind. The absence of a comprehensible mythology of death was the one factor that Ndawo suggests disturbed an otherwise idyllic, integrated vision of precolonial society. Christianity provided a comprehensible alternative, particularly in the wake of the Great Cattle Killing in 1857. Just as Ntsikana had initially borrowed his world view from the missionaries, Ndawo internalized the western philosophical discourse of his times. He suggests that Christianity provides a philosophical alternative to explain the unknown—including an uncertain political future—and support people in the face of death; yet he also wants to impress on his readers the importance of maintaining the sense of community that prevailed in a traditional world view.

The emphasis on a sense of community in Ndawo's writing reflects the central concern in much of the writing produced in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for it was in the community that people could find their sense of belonging. Often, as in Schreiner, it is the search for a sense of community that encapsulates the desire to belong, both socially and politically. In the table of contents to *Twentieth Century South Africa* (1994), William Beinart titles the section on nineteenth-century South Africa "A State without a Nation." His description accurately reflects the constantly shifting terms of identification with the African continent that is revealed in the writing of the period. The people of South Africa were all searching for new terms through which to define themselves and a sense of belonging that is of Africa. English fiction, such as that of Olive Schreiner, John Buchan and Rider Haggard, reflects a settler subject who is at once reaching out for an African identity but at the same time sees the expansion of the British Empire as a paramount duty. Afrikaans writers, especially in *Susanna Reyniers* and *Di koningin fan Skeba*, reflect a desire to become part of Africa. *Di koningin fan Skeba* in particular, reflects an attempt to implant a historical sense of "Europe in Africa" through the use of a distorted Christian mythology. On the other hand, while the early isiXhosa poetry called for African unity against colonial domination, the first novel, *uHambo lukaGqobhoka* (1909), reflects the influence of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and presents a colonized subject who feels alienated from his roots and whose journey towards a Christian faith is also a journey away from identification with the land that has been taken from him.

The task of finding a workable compromise between seemingly incompatible world views ultimately haunted South African writers for the remainder of the twentieth century. By the time the Union was formed in 1910, the political identities of the Afrikaner, the English and the amaXhosa had taken divergent paths. However, the literature of the previous century revealed a common desire to define and redefine the relationship to the African continent. Although their political aims and ideals had shifted, the people of South Africa nonetheless relied on similar strategies to engage with their sense of identity, and we find them delicately poised on the brink of a new order, in which the response to the past would determine future identities.

Chapter 5

"Digging Up the Bones of the Past": Literary-Critical Responses to History, Nationhood and Belonging[1]

If, as William Beinart suggests, nineteenth-century South Africa can be envisaged as "a state without a nation" (*Twentieth Century South Africa*, contents page), then the decades following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 reflected a range of efforts aimed at defining the terms upon which this nation was to be constituted and how its citizens would belong to that new construct, the South African nation. Furthermore, if, as Herbert Dhlomo suggested, African art can only flourish by "digging up the bones of the past [and] dressing them up with modern knowledge and craftmanship [sic]" ("Drama and the African" 7), then the various attempts by the writers of this period to engage seriously with the "bones of the past" reflect their efforts and their desire to construct a meaningful sense of belonging in and to their country. For the first time, intellectuals grappled intensively with their role in the development of a national psyche and reflected on the ways in which artists could best mirror the national consciousness. In their own ways, Herbert Dhlomo, Benedict Wallet Vilakazi, N.P. van Wyk Louw, William Plomer, and Roy Campbell, among others, all tried to construct a sense of what South African literature should be or should become, and in doing so, they contributed to defining the role of intellectuals in modern South Africa. Teasing out the details of the intellectual interaction that occurred among these individuals lies at the heart of this chapter and is part of establishing a shared problematic from which we can then begin to explore the effect on contemporary constructions of belonging. Mark Sanders, in *Complicities*, has undertaken some aspects of this work—particularly as regards the notion of complicity and the intellectual work done by N.P. van Wyk Louw. However, Sanders does not explore the complexity of the relationships that developed: Herbert Dhlomo occupies a footnote reference; Vilakazi is completely absent, as are Campbell, Plomer and Van der Post. To be fair, Sanders' project is not to establish a shared problematic for the 1930s in South Africa, but to explore the broader question of intellectual complicity with apartheid. Yet I feel that showing how the writers I discuss in this chapter drew on and responded to the work of their contemporaries can provide us with a fuller understanding of the kind of complicity Sanders wishes to explore. Their response to these various and often intersecting stimuli created a tapestry of intellectual labour that laid the foundation on which future social and literary identities could be built and around which they could be shaped.

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[1] A revised version of sections of this chapter has been accepted for publication in Nicholas M. Creary and Marlene G. De La Cruz-Guzmán, ed., *Centennial Reflections on the Lives and Work of A.C. Jordan and B.W. Vilakazi* (Johannesburg: Wits UP, Forthcoming 2006).

In both their writing and their criticism, the writers under discussion here and in the next chapter scrutinized the past in different ways: some drew on their knowledge of the oral tradition or on conventional history to write about real historical figures and, through the lives of these people, to extract lessons and warnings for the present and the future; others preferred to draw directly on the religious and philosophical legacy of the nineteenth century without the mediation of historical figures. Together, these individual attempts reveal some of the ways in which South Africans were engaged in finding ways to deal with the past and to cope with the future. In their various writings, Roy Campbell, Herbert Dhlomo, N.P. van Wyk Louw, and others, attempted to find new ways in which to negotiate the demands of late-colonial modernity and to facilitate South Africa's transition from being a largely traditional cultural outpost of the empire to becoming an independent nation that had to find its own solutions to the social, political and aesthetic problems that it faced.

The decades of the Twenties and Thirties, in particular, were marked by several parallel heated and passionate debates around language, literature, and the writer's role in society. Debates begun in English spilled over into Afrikaans, isiXhosa and isiZulu as writers and intellectuals exchanged views and extended the original discussions beyond their intended audiences through a range of media, including newspapers, journals, public talks, and books. Thus in 1926, Roy Campbell and Sarah Gertrude Millin exchanged views about the nature of English literature in South Africa in both *Voorslag* and the *Rand Daily Mail*. Stephen Black subsequently voiced his opinions on the matter in various contributions in his magazine, *The Sjambok*. While these altercations continued sporadically over the next few years, other people had taken up the status of African-language literatures: G.P. Lestrade published an article, "Bantu Praise Poems," in *The Critic* (1935); other white writers, including C.M. Doke ("The Future of Bantu Literature") and R.H.W. Shepherd (*Literature for the South African Bantu: a Comparative Study of Negro Achievement*) contributed to the debate about the nature and future of African-language literatures.

Lestrade's article in particular elicited responses from African writers, who were eager to show that traditional African literary forms were not incomprehensible (as Lestrade suggested) and that there was in fact an underlying structure and logic to these art-forms.[2] Initially, Herbert Dhlomo responded obliquely in an article, "Drama and the African," that appeared in the *South African Outlook* (1936). Three years later, Dhlomo would build on this argument and respond more directly to Lestrade when he and B.W. Vilakazi were involved in a bitter exchange of views in *Bantu Studies*.

In the meanwhile, the Afrikaans writer, N.P. van Wyk Louw, had responded to R.F.A. Hoernlé's Phelps-Stokes lectures, published as *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit* in 1939, in western Cape newspapers and at Broederbond meetings. Although he never became directly involved in any of these more publicized debates,

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[2] See Lestrade "Bantu Praise Poems," *The Critic* 4.1 (1935): 5–6 for an elaboration of his views on the impenetrability of African praise-poetry.

S.E.K. Mqhayi, through his journalism and his utopian allegory, *u-Don Jadu* (1929), had also contributed to the debate on South African modernity and the nature of South African, and specifically Xhosa, literature. In an article written in *Umteteli wa Bantu* under the pseudonym "Nzululwazi" ("Isifundo semfuduko yambhulu"—The Great Trek of the Boers), Mqhayi remarked how the Great Trek contributed to a sense of unity among the Boers. He held up their refusal to be subjugated by the English as an example to modern Africans, who should also learn to stand together in order to gain political strength as a unit. Taken in conjunction with his writings on African history and the role and place of tradition within a modern society, a discussion of these journalistic endeavours by Mqhayi would undoubtedly contribute much to a fuller understanding of how Africans negotiated the demands of modernity.[3]

The fact that these debates extended across several languages and in different forms of media (newspapers, journals, books and public forums) invariably meant that, at times, discussions continued beyond the original forums and beyond the initial readership. So, for instance, many readers of the *South African Outlook*, the liberal opinion journal published by the Lovedale Press, also read the short-lived but nonetheless explosive magazine, *Voorslag* (edited by Roy Campbell, William Plomer and Laurens van der Post). These readers would therefore have been familiar with Herbert Dhlomo's article, "African Drama and Poetry," that appeared in the *South African Outlook*,[4] as well as with Benedict Vilakazi's response to it[5]—but might have

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[3] Considering the time-span covered by Mqhayi's journalism and the fact that the full scope of his journalistic output under several *noms-de-plume* in a variety of newspapers and other diverse publications still needs to be assessed, it is impossible to engage in any depth with Mqhayi's contribution to literary debates at this point. However, see Ncedile Saule's M.A. dissertation, "A consideration of S E K Mqhayi's Contributions to *Umteteli waBantu* under the Pseudonym 'Nzululwazi'," M.A. Diss, Unisa, 1989, for a succinct analysis of the scope of Mqhayi's journalistic endeavours and the implications his writing had for the development of African political identity.

[4] See Herbert Dhlomo, "African Drama and Poetry," *South African Outlook* 69 (1 April 1939): 88–90; rpt. in *English in Africa* 4.2 (1977): 13–18.

[5] B.W. Vilakazi, "African Drama and Poetry," *South African Outlook* 69 (1 April 1939):

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been unaware that aspects of their debate had spilled over into a journal called *Bantu Studies*, a new journal of African studies published by the Department of African Languages at the University of the Witwatersrand,[6] and even to the *Transvaal Native Education Quarterly*.

By the same token, although Dhlomo and Vilakazi were undoubtedly familiar with Alfred Hoernlé's book, *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit* (1939), and with Mqhayi's writings in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, there is no evidence to suggest that they were aware of the ways in which N.P. van Wyk Louw engaged with Hoernlé's book.[7] It is only by reading all of these contributions together after the fact and by investigating the "interactions, collusions and antagonisms" (Brown, "National Belonging" 768) that we can begin to understand not only the difference between them, but also the significant ways in which these writers traversed the same territory and fashioned related or parallel solutions to problems of identity and belonging in modern-day South Africa.

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166–67.

[6] See B.W. Vilakazi, "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu," *Bantu Studies* 12 (1938): 105–34, and the response by H.I.E. Dhlomo, "Nature and Variety of Tribal Drama," *Bantu Studies* 13 (1939): 33–48; rpt. in *English in Africa* 4.2 (1977): 23–36.

[7] Louw presented a paper on Hoernlé's book at a Broederbond meeting in 1940. Mark Sanders offers a more detailed analysis of Louw's response and the way in which it influenced his own view of race relations in South Africa ("'The Problems of Europe': N.P. Van Wyk Louw, the Intellectual and Apartheid," *Journal of* Southern *African Studies* 25.4 (1999): 611). The argument is extended in *Complicities* 57–92. In their introduction to the facsimile reprint of the first three issues of *Voorslag*, Colin Gardner and Michael Chapman suggest that Louw was also influenced by Roy Campbell's work (Introduction 15), thus implicating yet another link in the already wide-ranging chain.

The first wave of English writers in twentieth-century South Africa wrote primarily for a (European) metropolitan audience. Although some of these writers, including Roy Campbell, William Plomer and Stephen Black, were born in South Africa, they grew up with a distinct awareness of their European heritage. Plomer went to school in England and eventually returned there to live. Others, like John Buchan, continued the tradition of visiting observers who left after a short period in South Africa, but subsequently relied on the South African experience for some strands of their fiction. Although there were earlier efforts at aimed at creating a uniquely South African literature, it was only after the Second World War, with the appearance of more writing in English by Africans, that white English writers began to see the possibilities of writing a truly South African identity.[8] One of these early attempts to move towards a radical reformulation of a South African literary aesthetic occurred in the first three issues of the journal *Voorslag* in 1926. For the duration of these three issues, Roy Campbell edited the journal, with the assistance of William Plomer and Laurens van der Post.[9] However, artistic differences between the editor(s) and the financial backers of the journal resulted in a bitter exchange that ended with Campbell's abrupt resignation.

The name of the journal was taken from the Afrikaans word for a whiplash, and as the title implies, the editors "intended to sting the mental hindquarters, so to speak, of the bovine citizenry of the Union" (Plomer *Autobiography* 171).[10] The financial manager, Maurice Webb, had written in his introduction to the first issue that

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[8] Both Nadine Gordimer and Paul Rich have drawn attention to this fact.

[9] Although Campbell had invited Plomer to join him on the editorial board and his contributions to the journal were substantial (he and Campbell wrote most of the copy for the first issue under their own names or *noms de plume*), Plomer was never officially accredited as an editor. Van der Post's contribution was more peripheral and his role was seen as that of "Afrikaans editor." Like Plomer, his appointment was never formalized, yet his presence and input was undoubtedly valued.

[10] William Plomer discusses the *Voorslag* period in his autobiography (*The Autobiography of William Plomer* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1975]) 164–78, and Peter Alexander presents a succinct though somewhat romanticized overview of the

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> In Politics Voorslag [sic] has no party. It offers an open platform for the consideration of social and political questions free from party or race prejudice.… As with political parties, so with the two languages of the South African Union. Either language will be represented and contributions, accepted for publication, will appear in the language of the writer, be it English or Afrikaans. (*Voorslag* 1.1: 3)[11]

However, Plomer and Campbell felt differently on this matter and remained intent on communicating a more politicized agenda regardless of Webb's opinion. Although the content of the journal under the editorship of Campbell was consciously intended to elicit a reaction from the public and often contradicted contemporary views, the influence of the first three issues on the South African literary scene can be seen in titles of several subsequent journals as well as in the shifting focus of liberal fiction in South Africa.[12]

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development of the polemic surrounding the production of the first three issues of *Voorslag* in chapter 6 of his biography of Plomer, *William Plomer: A Biography* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). For further discussion of the magazine and the related correspondence see also Roy Campbell, William Plomer, and Laurens van der Post, eds. *Voorslag. A Magazine of South African Life and Art. Facsimile Reprint of Numbers 1, 2, and 3 (1926)*, with an introduction and notes by Colin Gardner and Michael Chapman, Killie Campbell African Library Reprint Series 5 (Pietermaritzburg and Durban: University of Natal Press/Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1985). Although several attempts have been made to assess the impact *Voorslag* had on later writers, the relationship between the ideas expounded in the journal and other debates that were developing concurrently have not been analysed. See Geoffrey Haresnape, "The Writings of Roy Campbell, William Plomer and Laurens van der Post, with Special Reference to their Collaboration in "Voorslag" ("Whiplash") Magazine in 1926," Ph.D. Diss., University of Sheffield, 1982; Peter F. Alexander, "Campbell, Plomer, Van der Post and 'Voorslag'," *English in Africa* 7.2 (1980): 50–59; and Peter F. Alexander, "Literary Liberalism: The *Voorslag* Trio in Political Retrospect," *Current Writing* 9.2 (1997): 21–35.

[11] My citations all come from the Killie Campbell facsimile edition. Since this edition is variously numbered—the introduction, the facsimile issues and the various appendices are numbered separately, in roman numerals—I have, for the sake of clarity, included the volume and issue numbers as well as the page numbers in my citations.

[12] For a discussion of liberalism and South African fiction, see Paul Rich, "Liberal Realism in South African Fiction, 1948–1966," *English in Africa* 12.1 (1985): 47–82;

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Despite Webb's "apologetic little preface" as Campbell called it (Letter from Campbell to Maurice Webb, June/July 1926; rpt in *Voorslag 1–3* 47–48), the first issue bristled with controversy.[13] Criticism of the first issue was as scathing and as reactionary

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and Paul Rich, "A New South African Liberal Conscience?" *Current Writing* 9.2 (1997): 1–20. Two of the most successful and influential "imitator" journals are *Sjambok* (Whip) and *Die Touleier* (the one who leads the oxen), as well as the later response, *Bloody Horse*. The title of the latter publication derives from a satirical quatrain written by Campbell in response to a general remark by critics praising the "restraint" with which Sarah Gertrude Millin (and South African writers in general) wrote:

> You praise the firm restraint with which they write—
> I'm with you there, of course:
> They use the snaffle and the curb all right,
> but where's the bloody horse?

[13] Despite the overall impact and the controversy surrounding *Voorslag*, it is difficult to draw from the contents any conclusion regarding the personal aesthetics of the three individuals whose names have become synonymous with the publication. Peter Alexander has shown very clearly that for Campbell liberalism was a passing phase—after openly displaying Communist sympathies while at Oxford, in his later life he openly supported the Spanish Fascists and on his return to South Africa in 1954 to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Natal, his talks embarrassed his liberal audiences by appearing to be apologies for apartheid (Roy Campbell, "Poetry and Experience, *Theoria* 6 (1954): 7–44). He later wrote that "I have to admit that for six months in Africa I joined the universal 'racket' out of sheer moral exhaustion and defeatedness" (qtd in Alexander, "The *Voorslag* Trio" 28). It was inevitably Plomer who drew Campbell to a more liberal political vision and we can therefore only take Campbell's reactionary stance as a reflection of his disillusionment with the political and artistic milieu in South Africa.

Alexander also points out (as have many other writers) that Van der Post was a consummate master at the art of inventing identities and successfully prevented any biography of his life from appearing while he was still alive. J.D.F. Jones's subsequent biography, *Storyteller: The Many Lives of Laurens van der Pos*t (London: John Murray, 2001) shows him to be a bit of a chameleon, reinventing his identity and his past several times. Still, Alexander is certainly correct in stating that for Van der Post, too, liberalism was not a permanent political vision and that his interest lay in the mythico-philosophical representation evident in his novels.

Of the three, only Plomer consistently reflected a liberal viewpoint, although after his departure to England his views reflected more and more the tenets of European/British liberalism than that of the peculiar twist reflected in South African

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as the contents of the magazine itself. The bafflement and resistance reflected by the majority of readers is best illustrated in the reaction from Sarah Gertrude Millin, then still a respected member of the artistic establishment.[14] Millin noted that

> the fact of the matter is that *Voorslag*, for all its South African flavour, is a branch of a well-defined overseas group, and one may therefore guess fairly accurately what its attitude towards Life and Art is going to be.... However, *Voorslag* is not exactly what it thinks it is. It is not quite original—for it has merely adopted one ready-made set of ideas instead of another ready-made set of ideas. (Millin, "A South African Magazine," rpt. in *Voorslag 1–3* 43)

To an extent, Millin is correct in her analysis for, on the surface, the inclusion of a contemporary reflection on Vincent van Gogh, as well as Campbell's laudatory review of T.S. Eliot's *Collected Works*, reflect Plomer and Campbell's artistic inclinations. Yet it would be naïve to suggest, as Millin does, that the magazine blindly followed a European tradition, as both Campbell and Plomer were acutely aware of the need to translate this influence into the realm of the South African local. Campbell concludes his essay on Eliot as follows:

> To read Mr. Eliot's poems is to realise the necessity for new values in modern life. There must be a great destruction in the human consciousness: we must gibe, sneer and ridicule our venerable reviewers into epileptic fits: we have plenty of muck to clear out of the way before we can start the great work of reconstruction. ("Marginalia" *Voorslag* 1.1: 62)

The reference to the "venerable reviewers" is, of course, Campbell's first swipe at Harold Wodson's bitter review of Plomer's novel, *Turbott Wolfe* (1925).[15] Although the

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liberalism, where some liberals became apologists for apartheid.

[14] Millin's rabidly racist ideas grew more pronounced as she grew older, and by 1953, her British and American publishers had publicly renounced her work and refused to deal with her. She suffered a similar decline into obscurity in South Africa.

[15] Although *Turbott Wolfe* was received most favourably in Europe and North America, its South African reception was, for the most part, negative. In his review of the book in the *Natal Advertiser*, Harold Wodson called it a "nasty book on a nasty subject" and

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reference to "reconstruction" is clearly a reference to the task of rebuilding and redesigning the South African literary landscape, it also contains an allusion to the political doctrine of Reconstruction—the official policy of the South African government between the conclusion of the South African War and the formation of the Union, which had as its underlying principle the reparation and restitution of damages suffered as a result of the war. To a large extent, Milner's policy of reconstruction was intended to bring about reconciliation between Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans, but its failure is evident in the continued schism between Afrikaans and English South Africans, and in the continued erosion of African political rights in the years subsequent to Union—a fact that disturbed Plomer in particular.

The inclusion in the first issue of a contemporary description of Vincent van Gogh reveals much about the editors' view of their role:

> [van Gogh's] work was so strange that in those days, when even Whistler was hardly accepted, few conceived that a new school was already in being. ("A Contemporary View of Van Gogh" *Voorslag* 1.1: 58)

Such a reference to a "new movement" and to the opposition Van Gogh faced from the establishment anticipates the heated debates surrounding the publication of *Voorslag* as much as it echoes the reception in South Africa of *Turbott Wolfe*.[16] The "new movement" Campbell had in mind was clearly rooted in a contemporary European intellectual tradition, for in his article "'Eunuch' Arden and 'Kynoch' Arden," he points out that "all

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attacked Plomer's politics openly. Clearly, white South Africa was not ready for Plomer's biting criticism. Campbell provided his own, more favourable reading of the book in the first issue of *Voorslag* ("The significance of Turbott Wolfe," *Voorslag* 1.1 (1926): 39–45). Wodson (as Wods Godson) again figured prominently in Campbell's satirical poem, *The Wayzgoose: A South African Satire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928).

[16] Campbell's correspondence with Webb prior to the publication of the first issue, as well as comments made in newspaper columns and at literary meetings in Durban all suggest that Campbell and Plomer were aware of the fact that their presence on the editorial board was enough to incense many readers. Clearly, they did not disappoint those individuals who were looking for a show-down.

English artists and writers who are doing anything worth while have their eyes on Europe" (*Voorslag* 1.2: 34).[17] Just as Eliot's work had turned the European literary establishment on its head and "cleared the muck," so it was Campbell's intention to revitalize South African literature by turning its literary establishment on its head. But first, he felt, he had to air the laundry—a task he accomplished magnificently.

For all his focus on Europe and its literary traditions, Campbell was aware of the tension that existed between the empire and its colonies. He saw himself at once as an inheritor of a European tradition and the person who had the potential to undermine that very tradition:

> Our intellectual empire is a wider and less destructible one than our geographical empire—a fact of which only foreigners seem to be conscious—and it is in many places undermining the latter. (*Voorslag* 1.2: 32)

In modern critical parlance, Campbell recognized the ability of the colonial, working from the periphery, to undermine and destabilize the European metropolitan centre. He also recognized that this is a powerful position from which he could invigorate the tired realm of English literature, thus steamrolling South Africa into modernity. In his own writing in *Voorslag*, he worked to establish some form of ambivalent compromise that would allow him to be both African and the inheritor of the European tradition. On the one hand, he speaks of "our" empire, and on the other, of "only foreigners" being conscious of the destructible nature of the empire. In acknowledging his own revolutionary potential, he situates himself as a foreigner (to the metropolitan centre); yet he fails to commit himself to exploiting that revolutionary potential and his words remain, to a large extent, the posturing of a young firebrand.[18]

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[17] In "Fetish Worship," Campbell writes that "South Africa mentally is merely an irresponsible foetus of a country" (8). This depiction of South Africans as intellectually an politically immature is similar to N.P. van Wyk Louw's description of South Africans as still belonging to a "colony"—that is people without their own identity and, therefore, still dependent on Europe for cultural and intellectual guidance.

As deliberately inflammatory as Campbell's rhetoric was, just as considered and incisive was that of William Plomer. His review in *Voorslag* of Norman Leys' book, *Kenya* (1925), reveals how Christianity had been used as a ruse for economic exploitation. He points to the fallacy of a social Darwinism that posits Africans as inferior.[19] Throughout the review, Plomer reveals a desire to engage with Africa on equal terms—to consider both his African and his European heritage equally. Although, like Campbell, he turned to the European modernist movement, to the European metropolis, for inspiration and guidance, his vision of a South African literature is not one of mere imitation, as Millin suggests. His poem, "The Strandloopers [sic]," written under the pseudonym Pamela Willmore and published in the first issue of *Voorslag*, sets up the contrast between Europe and Africa—hinted at in Plomer's review—and illustrates the way in which Plomer's political and aesthetic vision is made concrete in his creative work.[20]

The title of the poem is ambiguous and deliberately playful: most immediately, the title suggests a reference to the Strandlopers (literally, "Beach-walkers" or "Beachcombers"), the Bushman people who were the inhabitants of the southern African coastal plain at the time when the first European explorers passed by the coast of Africa.

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[18] It has to be noted that Campbell probably intended to make *Voorslag* a more inclusive and representative South African endeavour. He had already approached John L. Dube, a founder member of the ANC and its first president, to contribute articles in Zulu, and Plomer had approached Manilal Ghandi, son of Mahatma Ghandi, to contribute an article about Indian perspectives on race relations in South Africa. Obviously, after Campbell's resignation, these ideas floundered. The inclusion of Van der Post's article on Afrikaans literature can be seen as an attempt to involve yet another sector of South African society.

[19] In fact, Plomer writes, "There are those who think that the African races are in most ways superior" ("Dr. Leys and the Colour Question," *Voorslag* 1.1 [1926]: 54).

[20] The poem is reproduced in full as Appendix 1.

However, "strandloper" is also the Afrikaans name for the sand plover, a migratory bird that, in the northern summer, is common on European shores. In this sense, the poem clearly also forms an interplay with Campbell's poem, "The Albatross,"[21] that appeared in the first issue (*Voorslag* 1.1: 5–9). Living at Sezela on the Natal South Coast at the time of writing these poems, Plomer and Campbell took daily walks together along the beach, themselves then becoming "strandlopers," or beachcombers. The two men used these walks to discuss their views on a variety of subjects. It is therefore fitting to see the poems, "The Albatross" and "The Strandloopers," as emblematic of their relationship at the time and also as a creative "manifesto" for their magazine.

Plomer consciously sets about inverting the Darwinian evolutionary chain he introduces in the first lines of the poem. In the end, the material trappings of western civilisation contribute little to the notion of "culture" and the reader is left with an overriding sense that these very symbols of "progress" are in fact impediments. It is in the secondary allusion of the title, a reference to the migratory bird that finds itself on South African shores, that we find the heart of Plomer's application of a modernist aesthetic: just as the bird looks to warmer shores in winter and travels to Europe, but then returns to Africa to breed during the southern summer, so, too, a modern South African aesthetic needs to migrate between the equally attractive shores of Europe and Africa. In this sense, the choice of the Strandlopers as a subject for the poem is not incidental: Plomer turns to the original African inhabitants of the land to set up a contrast and a foil for a jaded European sensibility. Although the poem is rooted in European modernism, it finds a sense of cultural belonging in the people of Africa rather than in the art of Europe.

While Plomer's metaphor is fortuitous, it is necessary to note that by the time he wrote his poem, the Strandlopers had been hunted to extinction by the colonizers. In a way, then, Plomer's use of the metaphor is a return to the notion of Africa as a *tabula*

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[21] This title, too, conjures up a myriad of interpretative possibilities and the lure of an extended comparison is overwhelming.

rasa on which a Euro-colonial sensibility could be inscribed. In doing so, despite his good intentions, Plomer mirrors the common sentiment that no modern people can legitimately lay claim to Africa. It is at this point in this particular poem that his ability to ground identity in Africa falls apart.

This underlying tension between the European metropolis and Africa that manifests itself in the work of both Plomer and Campbell is equally clear in Laurens van der Post's contribution to the second number of *Voorslag*, "Kuns Ontwikkeling in Afrikaans" ("Artistic Development in Afrikaans" *Voorslag* 1.2: 39–43). Van der Post's opening remarks situate Afrikaans as a political rather than as an aesthetic construct, and he goes on to lament the fact that even in the literature that had been produced, the political had been foregrounded:

> Dit is is jammer dat die taalkwessie in Suid-Afrika vir so lang as uitsluitend 'n Taalkwessie beskou was. Daardeur is 'n baie algemene begrip veroorsaak dat Afrikaans slegs 'n politieke en nie 'n letterkundige betekenis het nie…
>
> Ook is daar tekens dat die tyd wanneer Afrikaanse Letterkunde sal bewonder word vir wat daarin skoon is en veroordeel sal word vir haar gebreke en wanneer Afrikaanse kultuur in die Regte perspektief—in vergelyking met die kultuur van die Buiteland—sal gesien word, vinnig nader kom. Maar dit neem egter nie weg van die feit nie dat die ontwikkeling van 'n eie Afrikaanse Letterkunde tot nou toe nog selde behoorlik raak gesien is.
>
> [It is a pity the language issue in South Africa for so long has been viewed exclusively as a Language Issue. As a result, there is only a very general understanding that Afrikaans is only a political and not a literary concept…
>
> There are also signs that the time when Afrikaans Literature will be admired for what is beautiful in it and be condemned for her shortcomings and when Afrikaans culture will be seen in the Correct perspective—in comparison with the culture(s) of Foreign countries[22]—is rapidly approaching. But this does not detract from

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[22] Van der Post's original "Buiteland" is literally translated as "Outside Land." The connotation of the original is "Foreign Shores"—that is to say, across the ocean. The

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> the fact that, until now, the development of an Afrikaans Literature that is our own has seldom been properly recognized.]
>
> (Van der Post "Kuns Ontwikkeling" 39–40)

However, as the latter part of the quoted passage indicates, there is still hope, for there is an indication that the literature will move towards a position of *l'art poùr l'art*.[23] Van der Post notes that "die grootste waarde van die letterkunde van die Patriot-beweging lê waarskynlik in die definitiewe afwyking wat dit van Nederlands gemaak het en in soverre as wat dit gehelp het om 'n volksbewussyn te kweek" (*Voorslag* 1.2: 41—the greatest contribution of the literature of the Patriot movement probably lies in the definite deviation it made from Dutch and insofar as that helped to cultivate a national [*volks*] consciousness." Van der Post suggests that the Patriot movement's greatest achievement lies in separating Afrikaans from its Dutch baggage, while at the same time calling for Afrikaner culture to be evaluated in comparison with European literatures. Van der Post's ambivalent insistence on the idea of a definite *difference* between Afrikaans and Dutch (read Europe) links his observations most strongly with those of other contemporary Afrikaans intellectuals—in particular, the views of N.P. van Wyk Louw.

For Van der Post, the analysis of Afrikaans literature was merely a passing interest, since, like Plomer and Campbell, he would soon leave South Africa permanently. The task of undertaking a more thorough assessment of the role and

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implication is almost always in reference to Europe. Van der Post is therefore openly advocating a comparison between European culture and Afrikaans and he thus re-emphasises the central position of a European aesthetic in the eyes of the *Voorslag* trio.

[23] There is an interesting correlation here between Laurens van der Post's views on Afrikaans literature and Robert Shepherd's pronouncement *in Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu: A Brief History and a Forecast* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1945) that

> Bantu writers who have escaped from a purely utilitarian or propagandist view of literature and whose souls are dominated by ideas of art for art's sake will make known the soul of Africa. (89)

function of the Afrikaans writer was left to his contemporaries. Perhaps more than anyone else, it was the poet and critic, N.P. van Wyk Louw, who attempted to define the role of the writer and artist in the development of Afrikaans.

In focusing discussion on the significance of *Voorslag*, it is possible to overstate the importance of the magazine. Several other magazines—whether one regards them as mere imitations or as efforts at continuing the work started by *Voorslag*—possibly had a deeper and more permanent effect on South African literature. An example is Stephen Black's weekly magazine, *The Sjambok*, which appeared between 1929 and 1931. As Black himself noted,

> *The Sjambok* has not yet received the compliment of passable mimicry; but we hear that a positive small-pox of imitators now threatens to afflict the unfortunate public. Some of our imitators will be too high-brow (oblivious of the fate that befell Roy Campbell's eclectic venture in Durban); and some will be too low in every way, heedless of the fate that has befallen the various attempts to mix ink with mud instead of brains. ("An Epidemic of Imitators" 14)

Black is to be credited with encouraging several young African writers, including R.R.R. Dhlomo, to publish their creative writing in *The Sjambok*. As Gardner and Chapman note in their introduction to the facsimile edition of *Voorslag*, a significant difference between these "imitator" publications and *Voorslag* is that they involved writers "who, from the start, were prepared to stay in South Africa and to see this country, and not Europe, as the yardstick by which artistic value was to be measured" ("Introduction" 16). However, all this does not detract from *Voorslag's* significance as a trendsetter, particularly with regard to the tensions that existed between Europe and Africa that were reflected in the overlap that existed in the way Herbert Dhlomo, Benedict Vilakazi, and N.P. van Wyk Louw articulated their respective views on South African literature.

Louw's influence on Afrikaner thinking is significant and his work has inspired both apologists for apartheid[24] and more liberal-minded Afrikaners, including the

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[24] See J. Marais, "Raka, deur N.P. van Wyk Louw: die agtergrond en simboliek van die

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members of the Sestigers—the group of Afrikaner writers and intellectuals who, in the 1960s, began to question the apartheid regime's ideology.[25] Louw borrowed the rhetoric of South African liberalism and put it to work to reshape ideas he had gleaned from more conservative (indeed, reactionary) Afrikaner ideologues; he borrowed the nationalistic discourse of nineteenth-century German philosophers and applied it to the Afrikaners' struggle for recognition; and, at times, he even echoed the discourse used by African nationalists. Mark Sanders points out that Louw's conception of an Afrikaner liberalism based on racial segregation was developed from his dialogue with the liberal South African philosopher, R.F.A. Hoernlé. Hoernlé's 1939 Phelps-Stokes lectures at the University of Cape Town, subsequently published as *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit*, had presented a rather bleak future for the South African liberal. In essence, Hoernlé argued that in a country where the white population was unwilling to give up its claim to supremacy, there appeared to be no other option than total

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gedig in die eietydse samehang (1)," *Die Afrikaner* 26 Nov 1993: 4, 10; and "Raka, deur N.P. van Wyk Louw: die agtergrond en simboliek van die gedig in die eietydse samehang (2)," *Die Afrikaner* 3 Dec 1993: 4, 10.

[25] The group included figures such as Jan Rabie, Bartho Smit, Breyten Breytenbach and André Brink. For a discussion of the importance of the Sestigers, see Jack Cope, *The Adversary Within: Dissident Writers in Afrikaans* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982) or J. Polley, ed. *Verslag van die simposium oor die Sestigers: gehou deur die Departement Buitemuurse Studies van die Universiteit van Kaapstad, 12–16 Februarie 1973* (Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau, 1973).

The reasons why people have been able to appropriate Louw's work to support opposing ideological points of view stem from the complex way in which Louw constructed his arguments. Over a period of several decades (from the 1930s to the 1960s), he constantly revised and refined his views on literature and politics. Although two of Louw's most astute critics, Mark Sanders and Gerrit Olivier (respectively, in *Complicities* and in *Perspektief en profiel: 'n Afrikaanse literatuurgeskiedenis* [Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1998]) both talk about a change or a revision in his thinking, I see it more as a refinement or a slight shift. They note, correctly, that by the 1950s his concerns had changed substantially. However, an article such as "Uithoek en middelpunt" [Outpost and Centre], written in 1955, was, as Louw himself points out, a response to a book he had read 20 years previously and which still haunted him. In this article, Louw reveals a far greater correspondence between his early and late work than either Sanders and Olivier acknowledge.

segregation of the peoples of this country. As Sanders points out, it is, and probably will remain, unclear whether Hoernlé was himself touting segregation as a political ideology consistent with liberal thinking, or whether his own argument led him into that state of despair ("Problems of Europe" 617). Hoernlé ends his book on a note of foreboding and darkness, implying that he did not necessarily see segregation as an ideal solution, but that it was the only conceivable way out of the current impasse. Yet it was by opening the door to the possibility that racial segregation could be consistent with a liberal outlook that Hoernlé provided the opportunity for Louw to incorporate liberal dialogue into the realm of Afrikaner thinking.

Of crucial importance in Louw's successful appropriation of Hoernlé's discourse is the fact that he elides from his argument Hoernlé's key proviso that segregation seemed the only solution in a country where "one racial group…is, and is determined to remain, the dominant group" (*Native Policy* vii). Hoernlé's proviso is a crucial one, since it was white South Africa's insistence on domination that had prompted his revision of liberalism in the first instance. It is conceivable that without this insistence on racial domination, Hoernlé may not have felt the need to rethink South African liberalism in the way he did. However, by eliding this important rider, Louw is able to use Hoernlé's argument to call for a revision of the liberal tradition that would be consistent with both Afrikaner nationalism and a segregationist ideology.

Lest one is tempted to think that Louw's argument in favour of a more liberal rethinking of Afrikaner identity politics was a call to open the fold to a radical revaluation of Afrikaner identity, one has to remain cognisant of the fact that Louw insisted that this rethinking take the form of what he termed "loyale verset."[26] In its simplest translation, this implies "loyal resistance" or "vigilant opposition" or even "loyal opposition," with its overtones of British parliamentary politics. More than any other concept, it was his notion of *loyale verset* that shaped the Afrikaner intellectual tradition. Through *loyale verset*, Louw argued, it was possible to nurture what he termed *volkskritiek*—an internal, home-grown criticism. This was important, for,

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[26] The title of Louw's second collection of essays was *Loyale Verset* (1939; rpt in *Versamelde Prosa* [Collected Prose], vol. 1 [Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1986] 67–174). In the collection, Louw explores a wide range of topics related to the artist's relationship to his society and the right of a people to call itself a "nation" (*volk/nasie*). The use of the terms *volk* and *nasie* remain problematic and difficult to define.

> Die groot kritiek ontstaan wanneer die kritikus hom nie buite nie, maar in die midde van die die groep stel wat hy kritiseer, waneer hy weet dat hy onverbreekbaar verbind is in liefde en noodlot en skuld aan die volk wat hy waag om the bestraf; waneer hy nie praat van "hulle" nie, maar van "ons".
>
> [Great criticism comes about when the critic places himself, not outside, but in the centre of the group he criticizes, when he knows that he is inextricably bound in love and in fate and debt to the *volk* whom he dares to berate; when he speaks not of "them" but of "us".]
>
> ("Volkskritiek" 167)[27]

Louw's conceptualisation of a liberal re-thinking of Afrikaner identity was augmented with a less public dialogue with the segregationist-minded Afrikaner, Geoffrey Cronjé, from whom Louw borrowed the central notion of *voortbestaan in geregtigheid*—survival in justice; living in righteousness.[28] Louw intended the term to stand in for the relationship between the Afrikaner *volk* and the other "nations" in South Africa, for at the heart of Louw's argument lay the fact that he saw South African society "comprised, in tenuous union, [of] a number of distinct national groups (*nasies*, *volke*), both black and white" (Sanders "Problems of Europe" 608). As Sanders points out, Louw argued that full separation of these "nations" was consistent with a liberal vision and that it was also a "problem of Europe," thus suggesting that "apartheid was developed and [could be] justified…as an adaptation of the European political tradition" (607). Louw argued that Hoernlé had seen that the European liberal tradition needed to be revised for a South African context since it was clear that

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[27] Sanders ("Problems of Europe" 610–11) draws attention to the striking similarity that exists between Njabulo Ndebele's post-apartheid "ideal of criticism…completely home-grown and spawned by our revolution" ("Open Letter to Breyten Breytenbach," *DSA: Die Suid-Afrikaan* 50 [1994]: 21) and Louw's concept of *volkskritiek*.

[28] Sanders notes the difficulty in translating the concept. Sanders also explores "rightful existence" or "just existence" and "existence in righteousness" as possibilities for translation ("Problems of Europe" 613).

> "klassieke" Europese liberalisme het sy ontstaan gehad in lande met 'n homogene rasse- of volkesamestelling; dit is in die multi-nasionale Suid-Afrika bya [sic] meganies ingevoer sonder om die toepassing van die beginsel weer van nuts af te deurdink.
>
> ["classic" European liberalism had its origin in lands with a homogenous race- or *volk*-composition; it was almost mechanically imported into multi-national South Africa without thinking through the application of the principle anew.]
>
> ("Vegparty of Polemiek" 504[29])

A central concern in Louw's thinking about literature was his definition of what constituted a *volk*. The term has come to be synonymous with Afrikaner identity, yet it is a far more complex and nebulous concept that can also mean "nation" or "people" or even "tribe." Inherent in the more common use of the term is a sense of independence and the implication of a fiercely guarded sense of belonging (in Africa).

In one of his earliest definitions of the term *volk*, Louw pits it against the idea of a "colony":

> Die kolonie is 'n volksbreuk en weet dat hy fragmentaries is, dat die volle straal van sy volk se lewe nie deur *hom* gaan nie. Gewoonlik bevat hy maatskaplik nie alle stande en soorte nie (amptenaare oorweeg byvoorbeeld); hy gee op geen gebied rigting nie maar ontvang sy rigting van die moederland af. 'n Volk is egter 'n eenheid en universeel; hy ontvang alle stande en klasse, en gaan bokant algar uit; hy is gelykwaardig in sy reg met die ander volke as kultuurdraer in die wêreld; hy is hom van sy individualiteit bewus.
>
> [The colony is a fragment of a nation and knows that it is fragmentary, that the full stream of the nation's life does not pass through *it*. Usually it does not contain all classes and types (for instance, civil servants dominate); it does not set the trend in any

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[29] Trans. by Mark Sanders, "Problems of Europe" 615.

> area, but receives its direction from the motherland. A nation (*volk*), on the other hand, is a unit and universal; it accepts (people of) all classes and standings, and rises above them all; in its right as a bearer of culture, it is equal to other nations in the world; it is aware of its own individuality.]
>
> ("Rigting" 8[30])

The class-inclusive nature of this view of the *volk* is deliberate. One of Louw's primary concerns at the time was that Afrikaans literature had not kept up with the shifting basis of the white Afrikaner people: while Jochen van Bruggen was eulogizing the simple-minded rustic in his *Ampie* trilogy and holding up the farm as a central trope for Afrikaner identity, Louw's "new Afrikaner" was staring down the barrel of a gun in the mineworkers' strike of 1922.[31] Literature, he argued, had to adapt itself to reflect the reality of Afrikaner existence ("Rigting" 6–7). As long as Afrikaners viewed themselves as rustics, they would continue to regard their language as inferior and thus remain unable to take their place among the nations of the world.

For Louw, a central element in the transition from "colony" to *volk* involved moving beyond the point where writers had to look to Europe for guidance. Whereas for Campbell and Plomer, European art had to be the yardstick in the development of a local literature, Louw felt that this would not offer Afrikaners the recognition they sought as a *volk*, but would bind them to the status of "colony." The only way out of this was to work towards due recognition of the Afrikaans language as a medium of expression:

> Solank ons sê dit of dat pas wel in Europease tale maar nie in Afrikaans nie; dat slegs enige hartstog of gedagte wat 'n Afrikaans mens beleef of gedink het, prinsipieel nie in ons Letterkunde pas nie, is ons nog 'n kolonie van 'n vreemde kultuur, nie 'n volk nie. Dan is die veronderstelling nog altyd: Engels, Duits, Nederlands, hulle is universeel; maar Afrikaans is lokaal. Alles, maar ook *alles* wat die moderne mens roer…moet ook in ons literatuur sy neerslag kry.

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[30] Trans. by Mark Sanders, "Problems of Europe" 615.

[31] The first book in the *Ampie* trilogy appeared in 1922.

> [As long as we say this or that fits into European languages but not into Afrikaans; that any emotion or thought that a person thinks or experiences in Afrikaans does not, in principle, belong in our literature, then we are still a colony of a foreign culture, not a *volk*. Then the presumption remains: English, German, Dutch, these are universal; but Afrikaans is local. Everything, but *everything* that stirs modern man…must be expressed in our literature.]
>
> ("Rigting" 8–9)[32]

The movement away from Europe towards an independent existence as a *volk* in Africa is conflated with the move towards modernity, and recognizing South Africa as a metropolitan centre is crucial to the establishment of Afrikaner identity. The transition to modernity meant that Afrikaans writers had to recognize the potential of their language as a vehicle for conveying the concerns of a people who had passed from the rural past into the modern environment of the city.

In Louw's opinion, an important difference between the Afrikaners and Anglo-South Africans was that while the Afrikaners were in the process of transforming themselves into a *volk* and becoming fully-fledged members of the modern international community of nations, Anglo-South Africans were still a *volksdeel*—a fragment of a nation ("Vegparty" 505). That is why he argued in "Rigting" that when a people still views itself as a colony, its writers and artists still felt the need to go into "exile" to the motherland—as Roy Campbell had done—since a colony fails to recognize its own talent. Using language that is reminiscent of Campbell's own, he writes:

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[32] Louw's insistence on using Afrikaans as a medium of expression and his nationalistic pride in its ability to convey every nuance of the Afrikaner experience compares well with B.W. Vilakazi's riposte to Herbert Dhlomo in 1939:

> By Bantu drama, I mean a drama written by a Bantu, for the Bantu, in a Bantu language. I do not class English or Afrikaans dramas on Bantu themes, whether these are written by black people, I do not call them contributions to Bantu Literature..... I have an unshaken belief in the possibilities of Bantu languages and their literature, provided Bantu writers *themselves* can learn to love their languages and use them as vehicles for thought, feeling and will. After all, the belief, resulting in literature, is a demonstration of people's 'self' where they cry: "Ego sum quod sum." That is our pride in being black, and we cannot change creation. ("African Drama and Poetry" 167)

> hierdie volkswording gaan nog duister en byna onbewus by ons voort, hele ryke van ons geestelike lewe moet nog deur hom verower word, veel moet nog afgebreek en van nuts af opgebou word.
>
> [With us, this becoming a nation continues in the dark and almost unconsciously, entire empires of our spiritual existence still remain to be discovered, many more need to be broken down and rebuilt from scratch.]
>
> ("Rigting" 8).

Like Campbell, he saw the need for "reconstructing" South Africa. He also saw the power of the outpost to inform and shape the relationship between the empire and the colony. The reconstruction relied very much on the individual efforts of writers and artists, since, for Louw, it was the artist's personal identity that gave the *volk* an identity as a whole. The artist is therefore a leader and a trendsetter around whom the notion of a nation (*volk*) is constructed and it is the artist who guides a people towards self-realisation.

In later years, Louw was to revise his position *vis-à-vis* the European intellectual tradition. In his Amsterdam lectures, he consciously strove to present the Afrikaner as the legitimate heir of a European intellectual tradition.[33] However, acknowledging that the Afrikaner had inherited a European intellectual tradition and presenting him as the revitalizing force behind this tradition was not an implicit return to a position that wanted to acknowledge the centrality of the European metropolis. In the article, "Uithoek en Middelpunt [Outpost and Centre]" that appeared in August 1951 (rpt. in *Versamelde Prosa* 411–14), Louw attempted to articulate the Afrikaner's convoluted relationship with the European metropolis. While recognizing the importance of the Afrikaner's European heritage, he dispels what he considers to be the myth that the border is necessarily a point of suspicion and refusal of entry. On the contrary, he argues, the recognition of a destabilized centre should be seen as immensely liberating, as it allows for the construction of a sense of belonging within (geographic) boundaries that is predicated not on homogeneity, but on difference.

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[33] See Sanders, "Problems of Europe."

Although "Uithoeke" was written during the later period of Louw's thinking about politics and language, he admits that in the article he takes issue with a statement made by General J.C. Smuts in the introduction to Monsignor F.C. Kolbe's *A Catholic View of Holism* (1928), which he had read 20 years earlier—thus suggesting that his argument is, in fact, a continuation and reworking of his thinking at that time. Kolbe's book is itself a response to Smuts's own book, *Holism and Evolution* (1926): in his introduction to Kolbe's book, Smuts acknowledges that Kolbe's response makes him feel less isolated, situated as he (Smuts) is "in this far-off corner of the world" (qtd in "Uithoeke" 411).[34] Talking about South Africa as a "far-off corner"—an outpost—in this way, Louw argues, assumes that there has to be a centre somewhere, and in this instance he identifies the centre as Britain, and more specifically, London, Oxford and Cambridge. This centring of the world around Europe and its political and intellectual capitals, he argues, is typical of the colonial cultural subconscious and it is a mindset that assumes

> dat daar êrens op die wêreld 'n sentrale kultuurtradisie is wat wel sy strale tot in die donkerste uithoeke kan uitbrei, maar tog sy ligbron, sy grootste helderheid op een plek het.
>
> [that somewhere on earth there is a central cultural tradition that has the ability to stretch out its beams to the darkest reaches, and yet maintain its source of light, its greatest luminescence, in a central place.]

(412)

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[34] A chapter from Smuts' book "Beauty and Nature" was included in the first issue of *Voorslag*. Campbell did not like the piece, as his derogatory reference to the article in *The Wayzgoose* shows.

But no culture, Louw maintains, can assume to be the centre of the world; each and every culture is its own centre.[35] No nation or people need see itself as being on the periphery; there are no centres. It is only when one recognises the power within this reversal that one can escape the colonial mindset.[36]

Louw's argument relies on two strategies: turning the metropolitan centre on itself; and utilising local cultural practices that exist within a community in order to create a meaningful sense of belonging.[37] While Bennington ("Postal Politics") maintains

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[35] Edward Said further addresses this issue in *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). However, I am interested here in providing a uniquely South African response to existence on the periphery. In formulating his argument in this way, Van Wyk Louw approaches what Ngugi' wa Thiongo calls "a plurality of centres all over the world" (*Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* [London: James Currey, 1993] 11). Ironically, Louw failed to see how he was employing this potentially powerful argument to centre his own cultural tradition, that of Afrikaner nationalism.

[36] Louise Shabat-Bethlehem notes that "Confronting its articulations with international theory, the South African voice appears at times to have actively to resist a sense of its own inarticulateness" ("'Under the Proteatree, at Daggaboersnek': Stephen Gray, Literary Historiography and the Limit Trope of the Local," *English in Africa* 24.2 [1997]: 28–50). By decentring critical debates, the South African voice need not try to articulate itself with reference to international theory. However, shifting theory away from a reliance on international theory does not preclude the usefulness of centres and margins within the South African literary scenario, as C.F. Swanepoel has attempted to point out in his 1998 article, "African-Language Writing and the Centre-Margin Debate," *South African Journal of African Languages* 18.1 (1998): 18–25. Swanepoel finds the centre/margin opposition useful when discussing the position of African-language literatures in relation to the more dominant Afrikaans and English literatures. See also Karen Barber, "African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism," *Research in African Literatures* 26.1 (1990): 3–30.

[37] One is, of course, aware of the inherent danger of ethnic nationalism inherent in this argument (for, indeed, Afrikaner Nationalists have used Louw's argument to support their ideological position, and Louw himself made overtures towards National Socialism). However, Louw makes it abundantly clear that no culture has the right to assume a sense of superiority—in this instance, over the Afrikaner. The collection of essays, *Liberale Nasionalisme* (1958, rpt. in *Versamelde prosa* 411–530), argues in favour of "loyale verset" (loyal resistance), a strategy that suggests that identification with the Afrikaner does not imply an uncritical view of Afrikaner Nationalism as a political ideology. The significance of Louw's argument in the current context lies in his

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that there remains a centre that can and should be resisted within the nation, Louw suggests a far more radical approach: there can be no centre. In such a decentred approach, one can engage with the metropolis on equal terms and assert the power of the local identity in lieu of the colonial mindset. It is only when the local asserts itself as an independent entity that it can successfully resist the self-deprecating attitude arising from the colonial mindset.

With the advantage of hindsight, one can find a remarkable affinity between Louw's argument for denying the centrality of the metropolis and imbuing a sense of identity through the exploration of local culture and the more pragmatic application of these ideas suggested some 20 years earlier by another critic, Herbert Dhlomo. In 1936, before submitting the manuscript of his play, "Chaka,"[38] to Lovedale Mission Press, Dhlomo published an article, "Drama and the African," in *The South African Outlook*. Dhlomo's primary concern in the article was to suggest a blueprint for African drama against which his own work could then be judged.[39]

In this article, Dhlomo saw African drama as "the reconstruction, recreation and reproduction of the great experiences of a people" (1936, reprinted in *English in Africa*, 1977, 6). In the sense that traditional drama represented issues that concerned "the people as a whole" (5), African drama was national. Dhlomo's focus on African history and tradition immediately emphasises the local and places it at the centre of a new

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recognition of the power embedded in local cultural practice and the need to activate this power before an independent sense of identity or belonging can be considered. It is interesting that Louw, like many other Afrikaner intellectuals of his time, argued in favour of assimilating the Coloured community into the ranks of Afrikanerdom.

[38] Reproduced in Nic Visser and Tim Couzens, eds. *H.I.E. Dhlomo, Collected Works* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985).

[39] Despite Dhlomo's efforts, the manuscript was rejected. For a more detailed exploration of the political tensions underlying this rejections see Peter Midgley, "Author, Ideology and Publisher: a Symbiotic Relationship. Lovedale Missionary Press and Early Black Writing in South Africa, With Specific Reference to the Critical Writings of H.I.E. Dhlomo," M.A. Diss. Rhodes University, 1993.

dramatic tradition.[40] But Dhlomo also recognised that a wholesale return to tradition was no longer possible:

> The development of African drama cannot purely be from African roots. It must be grafted in Western drama. It must borrow from, be inspired by, shoot from European dramatic art forms, and be tainted by exotic influences. The African dramatist should not fear being mocked as an "imitator" of European art. Only, he should write and produce his plays as he feels. His work should be marked by his own soul and individuality, for in drama it is not so much what is done as how it is done…. (7)

Dhlomo's response to European influence is ambivalent: while African writers had to take cognisance of European literary traditions, they had to reshape them to suit the needs of the African people. Like his Afrikaans contemporary, N.P. van Wyk Louw, who insisted that the Afrikaner could only become a *volk* once he no longer looked solely to Europe for guidance and inspiration, Dhlomo recognizes that it is important for the African writer to "write and produce his plays as he feels." While acknowledging the significance of a European tradition, this tradition had to be "grafted in" existing African traditions—only then would Africans be able to articulate their new, modern sense of identity.

The affinity between Louw's and Dhlomo's arguments is not coincidental: in the 1930s, both Afrikaners and Africans were working hard at establishing a unified sense of

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[40] Although, as Dhlomo points out, African drama has ancient origins, Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1935) was the first play written in English by an African author; it was also the second drama written by an African, preceded only by G.B. Sinxo's *Imfene kaDebeza* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1925). The concept of drama as a printed medium is therefore "new" within this context. *The Girl who Killed to Save*, along with Chaka, formed the literary blueprints of a new sense of unity and identity among Africans. Tim Couzens explores the concept of the "New African" in greater depth in the first chapter of his critical biography of Herbert Dhlomo, *The New African: A Study of the Life and Works of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985). With due reservation, therefore, I stick with the epithet "new" to describe Dhlomo's work and his discussion of its importance in the national project.

"national" identity beyond either the tribe (with all its anthropological and evolutionary baggage) or, in Louw's terminology, the "colony." Whereas Anglo-South Africans, like Campbell, might have been happy to remain "colonists" who could choose to return to the motherland, Africans and Afrikaners had only Africa to call "home." For them, a wholesale turn to Europe was a luxury they could not afford. Dhlomo therefore roots his new-found sense of national belonging and pride firmly in African traditions, while nonetheless recognizing that western dramatic forms had become part of the local scenery, and should be embraced as part of an entrance into modernity (cf. Canclini 1).[41] For him, this is not "mimicry," but an expression of African modernity. As David Attwell comments in his article, "Modernizing Tradition/Traditionalizing Modernity: Reflections on the Dhlomo-Vilakazi Dispute," Dhlomo's aim was to "traditionalize modernity" (105).

Like Louw, Dhlomo approaches the nation from the porous periphery: not only does he write from the perceived geographic outpost called South Africa, he does so as a member of the oppressed and marginalized black majority. From this position as an outsider on an imagined periphery, he looks introspectively at the possibility of constructing an identity that recognizes, but does not regard as central, the metropolitan culture. Dhlomo's sense of identity is imbued with the local—as Louw suggests it should be if it wants to deny the metropolitan centre. Dhlomo takes advantage of this destabilized periphery, of the strength inherent in a denial of the "exotic" metropolitan centre, to make use of the permeable nature of the borders and to take what is good from the metropolis, grafting it into a local sense of belonging that at once recognizes and rejects its influence on the local.

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[41] Dhlomo's insistence on a recognition of European influence in shaping modern African tradition is echoed by Anthony Appiah when he writes that "for us to forget Europe is to suppress the conflicts that have shaped our identities; since it is too late for us to escape each other, we must instead seek to turn to our advantage the mutual interdependencies history has thrust upon us" (*In my Father's House* 72).

However, an active engagement with the local is not enough. If African drama is indeed "the reproduction of the great experiences of a people" (6), then it also needs to reveal an interest in African history and tradition. The call for a local aesthetic that selectively utilises the "exotic" metropolitan culture should be acutely aware of its own history, as well as the politics that informs everyday life in the present:

> If it is true that the Past should form the background of African art, equally true it is that African art must deal with the things that are vital and near to the African today—the school, the church, the slums, the automobile, commerce, etc.

While a new sense of belonging should be predicated on an active engagement with a local aesthetic, it should also be placed securely within an historical context. Just as Louw argued for recognition in literature of the Afrikaners' new urban environment and his political battles, so Dhlomo called for a move towards creatively recognizing the urban environment of the new African.

In 1939, Dhlomo became entangled in an acrimonious debate with the Zulu writer, Benedict Vilakazi.[42] The basic difference between the two writers lay in their interpretation of African modernity. Both writers, as Attwell points out, had made it their life's work to negotiate the dichotomy between rural and urban lifestyles; between the traditional and the modern; and between the oral forms and the written word.[43]

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[42] Vilakazi, a poet, was also the first African to be appointed as an academic rank in the Department of African Languages at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1935.

[43] As Attwell ("Modernizing Tradition/Traditionalizing Modernity: Reflections on the Dhlomo-Vilakazi Dispute," *Research in African Literatures* 33.1 [2002]: 94–119) points out, it is precisely this constant negotiation of the two worlds that constituted their existence that problematizes the "bifurcated world" envisioned by Mahmood Mamdani in *Citizen and Subject*:

> [This world] is inhabited by subjects on one side and citizens on the other; their life is regulated by customary law on one side and modern law on the other; their beliefs are dismissed as pagan on this side but bear the status of religion on the other; the stylized moments in their day-to-day lives are considered ritual on this side and culture on the

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At the heart of both arguments lay a desire find to ways to cope with a version of modernity that was not only forced upon highly suspicious African people, but which was moreover predicated on their subjugation. The central concern for the African writer, Vilakazi argued, was for his

> mind and heart to rise above all circumstances imposed on him by conquest and subjugation to Western conditions. The Black man has a test to pass to prove his ability for what Emerson calls "the ability of man to stand alone." By this I do not indicate the isolation of the Black, but that the Black man, who is introduced into Western social and political systems, may keep unscarred his personal independence and integrity. The Black man has something to contribute to the world's literature, for he has yet to interpret his conception of the end of human existence and meaning of life. ("Conception and Development" 132)

Vilakazi recognizes the influence Europe has had on Africa; in turn, he wants to showcase an African world view so that Europe, in turn, may come to recognize Africa on terms that do not jeopardize the independence and integrity of the African people.

Vilakazi shared this ideal with both Herbert Dhlomo and N.P. van Wyk Louw, However, where Vilakazi and Dhlomo parted ways most sharply was in the best way to achieve this end. Vilakazi's approach is more forgiving than that of either Louw or Dhlomo, for whom the recognition of Afrikaner/African world views should be based more decisively on local aesthetics. While Dhlomo proposed to take modern ideas and apply them to traditional forms, Vilakazi proposed the opposite. Using his own work as

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> other; their creative activity is considered crafts on this side and glorified as the arts on the other; their verbal communication is demeaned as vernacular chatter on this side but elevated as linguistic discourse on the other; in sum, the world of "savages" barricaded, in deed as in word, from the world of the "civilized." (61)

While this bipolarity is useful, it does create, as Attwell notes, an either/or world that does not effectively encompass the world of the African intellectuals who do not live in a single sphere, but exist both "as 'citizens' and 'subjects'—are their worlds 'permanently sealed off from one another,' 'barricaded' in Mamdani's terms?" (100).

an experiment, he attempted to assimilate western poetic traditions and to adapt traditional Zulu poetic forms:

> there is no doubt that the poetry of the west will influence all Bantu poetry because all the new ideas of our age have reached us through European standards. But there is something we must not lose sight of. If we imitate the form, the outward decoration which decks the charming poetry of our western masters, that does not mean to say that we have incorporated into our poetry even their spirit. If we use Western stanza-forms and metrical system we employ them only as vehicles or receptacles for our poetic images, depicted as we see and conceive. ("Conception and Development" *Bantu Studies* 127)

As David Attwell suggests, Dhlomo sought to "traditionalize modernity" (105), while Vilakazi attempted "to modernize tradition" and by so doing to turn "Zulu expressive forms" into "recognizable contributions to world literature" (102).[44]

Although the debate between Dhlomo and Vilakazi centred on the place of rhyme in Zulu poetry, the questions raised in their respective arguments provided a framework for later critics and writers, including Peter Abrahams, Lewis Nkosi, Ezekiel Mphahlele and Njabulo Ndebele. One of the most valuable contributions that arose from the debate was the fact that both writers insisted on treating African oral traditions as literatures, whereas the trend at the time was to discuss these traditions ethnographically (Attwell 97).[45] In his article, Vilakazi had taken as his example the poem, "Umcayi kavuma" (Mcayi, the Daughter of Vuma). Using stanzas, rhythm and rhyme as representative elements of western poetry, he proceeds to show how these elements can function in a Zulu poem. The exercise was an important one, as it deliberately attempted to counter the allegation by G.P. Lestrade that praise-poems lacked structure ("Bantu Praise Poems" 5–6). Demonstrating structure—particularly defined in western terms—was important to Vilakazi's argument that traditional poetry had something to offer to world literature. Defining and illustrating structure also showed that the Zulu language was malleable enough to withstand the rigorous moulding that he felt was required by a western poetic sensibility. If Zulu poetry could be moulded into western forms, Vilakazi argued, it was also a medium worthy of conveying serious thought and portraying the innermost feelings of an individual and of his people.

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[44] Vilakazi writes that "If we are to believe and teach other races of humanity to believe our tale, the poets must be truthful…just as face answers to face, so does the heart to the heart of man to man" ("Conception and Development" 133). This universalizing sentiment undoubtedly echoed with the liberal mindset espoused by Alan Paton. Louw, with his claims re Afrikaans as a medium of expression, links up with Vilakazi in this respect.

[45] See Tim Couzens "The Continuity of Black Literature in South Africa before 1950," *English in Africa* 2.1 (1974): 11–24, for a more in-depth discussion of Dhlomo's influence in particular on later writers. Thengani Ngwenya starts exploring Vilakazi's role in the development of Zulu literature in "B.W. Vilakazi: The Poet as Prophet," *Alternation* 5.2 (1996): 127–46.

In his response, Dhlomo took a different view of "Umcayi kavuma." He focused on the one feature of the poem (and traditional poetic forms) that he felt neither Vilakazi nor Lestrade could explain sufficiently. Lestrade had commented that "the construction of sentences tends to be laconic and even staccato" ("Bantu Praise Poems" 6), while Vilakazi noted that traditional poetry displayed a "lack of perfect continuous description of a mood" (Conception" 112). These "gaps," Vilakazi contended, corresponded with stanza breaks, while Lestrade ascribed them to "the peculiar working of the Bantu mind" ("Bantu Praise Poems" 7).

Vilakazi's attempt to mould izibongo into the shape required by a western poetic tradition cut to Dhlomo's core and offended his Africanist political instincts. As an alternative, he suggested that the structure of the poem should not be found in an exotic rhyme scheme or stanza patterning, but in something more tangibly African and he therefore proposed that izibongo were more akin to dramatic performances than to poetry ("Nature and Variety in Tribal Drama" 23). Dhlomo therefore proposed that these "gaps" show the poems for what they are—the "mutilated and distorted remains of primitive, tribal dramatic pieces" (Nature and Variety" 23).

Dhlomo's argument is presented in several distinct phases: first he restructures the poem as a dramatic performance, complete with stage directions. Having presented his case, he sets out to create a historical link between various tribal poetic forms and ancient Greek drama, presenting a praise-poem in a call and response format that parallels the strophe and antistrophe of the Greek chorus. Finally, in what is an almost verbatim repeat of his 1936 article, "Drama and the African," he offers an analysis of tribal drama.

As David Attwell points out (104), Dhlomo's interpretation of the poem is suspect, but his underlying purpose is significant. By linking African dramatic performance to ancient European forms, he posits *ukubonga* (the art of praising) as an ancient and formative medium of creative expression. Rather than trying to dress the izibongo in foreign clothes, as Vilakazi does, he tries to prove their legitimacy by showing that *ukubonga*, too, is an ancient tradition that has influenced the modern self-perception of Africans.

Attwell also notes that Dhlomo's ideas seldom received the recognition they deserved, largely because his "language became asocial, strained, bloodless—frequently, it should be acknowledged, even absurd" (108). He is not alone in this assessment; several other writers have remarked on the oddness of Dhlomo's language.[46] However, what Dhlomo *did* possess was political acumen (Attwell 109) and this sharp ideological awareness had, by 1933, brought Dhlomo to the realization that the stage was a far more powerful and versatile political tool for conveying African aspirations than poetry. Dhlomo had for several years been arguing for the development of African "literary" drama, and his difference of opinion with Vilakazi was as much about offering a different future for African poets as it was about exploring the nature of African drama and the possibility that traditional praise poetry held for this medium. The core (and most coherent part) of his argument therefore focused on the nature of African drama and, to this end, he revisited an argument made in 1936:[47] African drama is not about the individual, but about the community. The *izibongo*, as part of a performative tradition, are not about expressing an innermost individual sentiment but about voicing the aspirations of a people as a community. For Dhlomo, the successful transition into and negotiation of modernity was predicated on the African's ability to forge a communal identity that reached beyond the tribal barriers that were increasingly being enforced by the government.

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[46] See, for instance Tim Couzens's remark that the line, "A snail jogs quiet by, as peaceful, mute" from the epic poem, *Valley of a Thousand Hills* (Marianhill: Marianhill Mission Press, 1941) is "the oddest line in all Dhlomo" (*New African* 228).

I have made a similar argument to Atwell's with regard to the correspondence between Herbert Dhlomo's views on language, nation and identity and those of later theorists such as Fanon and Ngugi. Although often poorly articulated, Dhlomo's ideas, developed in the 1930s, reflect what I call an "embryonic version" of later colonial theory ("The unsung Prophet: Herbert Dhlomo and Colonial Discourse Theory," 24th Annual African Literature Association Conference, Austin, Texas, 25–29 March 1998).

Despite the fundamental differences of opinion between Dhlomo and Vilakazi, they both acknowledged a basic tension that pervaded South African literature during the 1930s: how were writers to negotiate the interplay between a sense of the local and the dominant aesthetics of the metropolitan centre? Like many of their contemporaries, they proposed to turn the gaze back on Europe and to treat the local experience as equal to the European traditions they had inherited as a result of colonialism. They were not content with seeing South African literature as either an "embryo" (Campbell) or as the product of what Van Wyk Louw termed the "colony"—they wanted to be able to provide legitimacy to their "conception of the end of human existence and meaning of life," as Vilakazi expressed it ("Conception" 132).

The transition into a modern world, the movement out of obscurity on the periphery of the empire, depended very much on how writers were able to articulate their sense of the local in their writings. In their own writings, each one of these writers attempted to put into practice his or her theoretical observations. Through all the discussions, it becomes clear that if South African literature intended to articulate a sense of belonging in and to the continent, and if—in all its forms and languages—it intended to represent the hopes and aspirations of the people who inhabited the country, it would have to be built on an exploration of the local. The central question that many of these writers wished to explore in their creative work centred around how to belong in and to artistically represent Africa while paying due respect to a European tradition that, in many ways, remained formative.

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[47] The text has obviously been cannibalized from the older article, as the wording is virtually identical, with the odd new word interspersed.

Chapter 6

"Njenge mbuba yamanyama"—Negotiating with the Ancestral Spirits and God[1]

Upon his deathbed in 1821, Ntsikana is alleged to have exhorted his followers to be "njenge mbumba yamanyama" (Hodgson, "Genius" 35). His followers at the time were a handful of Xhosa converts, yet the call to remain united turned out to be political as much as it was philosophical when, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, one of the first Africanist political movements, Imbumba Yamanyama, took its name from his injunction. Ntsikana's unique integration of Christian and traditional religious mythologies was later reflected to some degree in the teachings of several African Initiated Churches. Ntsikana also alluded to the possibility of closer co-operation between black and white people in South Africa ("Ulo Thixo omkhulu," l.13). However, the reality of South African politics at the start of the twentieth century made the chances of this ever occurring seem increasingly remote. Instead of trying to find ways of living together, South Africans moved apart politically and philosophically and it is impossible to point to a single, cohesive local world view on which South African writers in the early twentieth century could build in order to articulate their experience of the local and their sense of belonging to the country and the continent.

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[1] A revised version of sections of this chapter has been accepted for publication in Nicholas M. Creary and Marlene G. De La Cruz-Guzmán, ed., *Centennial Reflections on the Lives and Work of A.C. Jordan and B.W. Vilakazi* (Johannesburg: Wits UP, Forthcoming 2006).

A local sense of belonging in South Africa grew not only out of a relationship with the land, but from the complex interrelationship between the land and the people of different cultures who inhabited it, as well as from the political forces that drove different sections of the population. Writers responded to the stimulus offered by European art forms in altogether new ways that reflected a keen awareness of the fact that though they shared some of the philosophical underpinnings of European culture, there was also much that was different. Despite the emphasis on difference and separation on a political and social level, and the conscious attempts by white writers in particular to reinforce their links with European culture, indigenous African knowledge systems continued to inform a local sense of belonging. Increasingly, South African writers came to realise that their concerns and their solutions to these concerns were not necessarily shared by the metropolitan culture on which they drew for so much of their modern existence. While black writers increasingly drew on their own histories and on traditional religious and philosophical systems to articulate a new modern identity, white writers (both Afrikaans and English) viewed these belief systems with suspicion and derision. Rather than openly embrace what Africa had to offer them, they consciously attempted to reinforce the link with the metropole. Yet, despite the overall shift towards European identity, white South African writers often relied on the very objects of their derision to construct their own localized sense of being and belonging.

The constant interplay between cultures and world views, as well as the often strongly-expressed desire to establish a sense of belonging left many South African writers continually performing a delicate balancing act between expressing European or African world views. This chapter will investigate some of the ways in which writers tried to find for themselves a working balance between indigenous knowledge systems and western, predominantly Christian, systems of belief. In the process of striking such a balance, many of the characters created by a diverse range of writers, including John Buchan, Joubert Reitz, Arthur Fula, A.C. Jordan and S.E.K. Mqhayi, create characters that reveal characteristics of the *tussenskapper* (a person in a state of in-betweenness) or were attempting to be *abahlanganisi* (mediators, or people who successfully manage to negotiate a space between cultures).

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After the conclusion of the South African War in 1902, South Africa's importance in the empire rapidly receded. In the immediate aftermath of the war, it was left to the governor, Alfred, Lord Milner, to establish political stability and to move the country towards political union. With the pending formation of a Union in South Africa, the failure of the Cape liberals to extend the African franchise to other provinces left them in a state of despair. C.W. de Kiewiet, a well-known observer of liberal thought, comments that

> when the intellectual leaders of a country become demoralized and perplexed, or feel repudiated, they can become, despite themselves, even without knowing it themselves, converts to the heresies they have battled. ("Loneliness in the Beloved Country" 423)

Under Milner, it was not the liberals who dictated and instituted policy in the postwar years; it was a handpicked set of able and impressionable young Oxford graduates known collectively as "Milner's kindergarten." Among these men was John Buchan, who later became the governor-general of Canada and the author of more than a hundred novels. His formative years, however, were spent under Milner's tutelage, where he was charged with the task of reconstruction efforts after the war.

Buchan travelled the countryside extensively on horseback and subsequently compiled his observations in a treatise, *The African Colony* (1903). It is an unabashed apology for colonialism at a time when the Empire was already disintegrating and it provides useful insight into the political implications underlying Buchan's first major African novel, *Prester John*, which appeared in 1910. After suggesting from the beginning that "the history of Africa can never be written" (*The African Colony* 4), Buchan sets about the task of doing precisely that in the first chapter: it is a sweeping history of the settlement of southern Africa, for

> South Africa is bound to the chariot-wheels of her past, and that past is intricately varied—a museum of the wrecks of conquerors and races, joining hands with most quarters of the Old World. (3–4)

In a manner typical of the Social Darwinists of the previous century, Buchan presents a vision of a continent that is under the constant sway of "development" and "retrogression" (5).[2] He provides a graphic description of how the original inhabitants, the Bushmen, were "hunted…down and shot…at sight, for indeed [they were] untamable" (6). The people in possession of the land when the Europeans arrived at what came to be called the Cape of Good Hope, the Hottentots, "too, were an insignificant race" (7). Having thus dismissed two autochthonous civilizations as "untamable" and "insignificant" and by implication therefore unworthy of entitlement to the land, Buchan continues to fashion an historic claim for Europeans—much like du Toit had done a few years earlier—by placing the Zimbabwe civilization within a Judaeo-Christian mythology. In this way, he re-inscribes the notion of Africa as *terra nullius*, a smouldering wasteland left barren in the wake of the *mfecane*.[3] He concludes that

> [f]or the last four centuries native South Africa has been the theatre of a continuous *völkerwanderung*, immigrations from the north, and in consequence a general displacement, so that no tribe can claim an ancient possession of this country. (11)

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[2] Buchan's relationship to Social Darwinism is treated more extensively in Craig Smith, "Every Man Must Kill the Thing He Loves: Empire, Homoerotics, and Nationalism in John Buchan's *Prester John*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 28.2 (1995): 173ff.

[3] The *mfecane* is also known as the "dispersion of tribes" following Shaka's reign of terror. While Shaka's military exploits cannot be denied or discounted, the myth surrounding his person exaggerated his stature. For a discussion of the representation of Shaka in literature and the development of a mythology surrounding him, see the following works by Dan Wylie: "Shaka and the Myths of Paradise," *English in Africa* 22.1 (1995): 19–47; "Violently Representing Shaka," *Mots Pluriel* 1.4 (1997); and *Savage Delight: White Myths of Shaka* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001). See also Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane As Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988): 487–519 for a revisionist interpretation of the *mfecane*. Cobbing presents an interesting (though occasionally tenuous) argument that the *mfecane* was a reaction to European encroachment into Shaka's territory. The article does, however, raise valid questions regarding the theory of the African interior as *terra nullius*.

It is in this land devoid of any claim to "ancient possession" that Buchan sets his novel, *Prester John* (1910). *Prester John* is the story of Davie Crawfurd, a young Scot, who goes to South Africa to manage a trading store and to ensure a return on his uncle's investment (19–20). In South Africa, Davie plays a crucial role in quelling a rebellion led by the African priest, John Laputa. After the rebellion has been successfully crushed, Davie returns to England with his fortune secured. What happens between Davie Crawfurd's arrival in South Africa and his departure is no "benign" tale of adventure as, at least one critic, David Daniell, has argued; it is the fictional articulation and culmination of Buchan's thoughts on South Africa and on colonization, begun earlier in *The African Colony*.[4]

In his comparative study of the novel and its serialized version, "The Black Captain,"[5] David Daniell suggests that *Prester John*'s continued popularity may have done Buchan "unintentional harm" (Daniell 137), and that the novel "belongs to the empire, and more benign strain [of literature of the empire], whereas 'The Black General' has been transformed into a more hard-nosed imperialist document" (140). The "unintentional harm" presumably refers to what Daniell considers the almost universal tendency among modern critics to condemn the novel's intrinsic racism. Daniell attempts to downplay the racist elements in the novel as "incidental remarks…to which objection must now be taken" (137)[6] and suggests that

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[4] T.J. (Tim) Couzens provides an insightful analysis of the ideological motives in *Prester John* in "'The Old Africa of a Boy's Dream'—Towards Interpreting Buchan's 'Prester John'," *English Studies in Africa* 24.1 (1981): 1–24. The period between the publication of *The African Colony* and *Prester John* also marks the end of Buchan's relationship with the Liberal Party. He joined the Conservatives in 1908 and his writing reflects the contemporary conservative views on the Empire and colonization.

[5] The novel was serialised in the boys' journal, *The Captain*, between April and October 1910.

[6] Daniell dismisses Tim Couzens's argument in "'The Old Africa of a Boy's Dream' as "perverse" (152, n.1) and "marred by shrillness."

> equally damaging is the systematic and very obvious secularization of what had been a biblically-based, profoundly religious book, allowing the great archetypal movements between death and rebirth, between black and white, between king and priest, between father and god, a full and satisfying play. (146)

Daniell argues that "Like Milton's Satan, [Laputa] is an archangel fatally and dangerously flawed: his flaw is not his blackness but his pride, a theological not a racial concept" (148). Both *The African Colony* and *Prester John* provide ample evidence to contradict Daniell's claim that the novel is "benign," but it is Daniell's insight into *Prester John* as a "profoundly religious book" that requires further elucidation here.

The philosophy of Social Darwinism that dominated the nineteenth century drew on the religious concept of a chain of being, "whereby nature was taken to be a unified whole.... In the nineteenth century, this essentially theological notion was adapted to scientific descriptions of nature and refined by Darwinian theories of evolution" (Street 97). The incorporation of a quasi-religious discourse into the realm of science and social studies allowed for the creation of a stable, ordered vision of the scientific universe. It was, however, a delicate balance, and any change in religious thinking necessarily affected the equilibrium. If the existing equilibrium was disrupted, the entire social order, in effect, was threatened.

In the minds of many whites, precisely such a disruption of the stability occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in the shape of a religious movement among Africans known then as Ethiopianism. These independent African churches, later also known as Zionist Churches and more recently as African Initiated Churches, had split from the mainstream missionary churches and applied the tenets of the Christian faith in strikingly new and invigorating ways.[7] Still, although John Buchan refers directly to the

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[7] The use of the terms "Ethiopian" and "Zionist" in the following discussion is problematic, although these were the contemporary terms used by, among others, John Buchan. The term "Ethiopian" has little connection with the Church in Ethiopia and refers rather to a desire among Africans to be independent—like the Ethiopians; in other words, although applied in a religious context, the political implications are evident.

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potential threat of Ethiopianism in *Prester John* and William Plomer and N.P. van Wyk Louw both revisit African religion in an oblique way—respectively in *Turbott Wolfe* (1926) and *Raka* (1942)[8]—there is no detailed critical exploration of the impact it had on the development of a sense of belonging in modern South Africa. In order to understand fully the significance of Buchan's one direct reference to this movement in *Prester John*,[7] it is therefore necessary first to understand more about the movement itself.

The missionaries who arrived in South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century were often "racist, and considered themselves superior to the African clergy who were just then beginning to be ordained in greater numbers" (Hayes 163). Disenchanted with the racism found in European-controlled churches, Africans initiated their own religious movements. The clergy in these churches had been trained in western theology and, more often than not, maintained the general structures of the churches from which they seceded. At about the same time, a number of American missionaries from the

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"Zionist" in this context should also not be confused with the later Zionist movement among Jews in the Diaspora. The name derives from the desire among several evangelical Christian groups around the world to found a new Zion. Stephen Hayes succinctly presents the history of the "Ethiopian" Churches and the "Zionist" movements in his article, "African Initiated Church Theology," *Initiation into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics*. eds. Simon Maimela and Adrio König. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1998) 159–77. Hayes points out that the "distinction [between "Ethiopian" and "Zionist"] can be useful, provided one bears in mind that it is not absolute. Any particular group or denomination might fall anywhere on a continuum between the two…" (164). Following recent scholars such as Hayes and Allan Anderson ("African Initiated Church Hermeneutics," *Initiation into Theology* 399–416), it is perhaps better to speak of "African Initiated" movements. The information on African Initiated Churches presented in this section is drawn from Bengt Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and Some Swazi Zionists* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1976) and the following chapters in *Initiation into Theology*: Allan H. Anderson, "African Initiated Church Hermeneutics," 399–416; Cornel du Toit, "African Hermeneutics," 373–98; Timothy G. Kiogora, "Black Hermeneutics," 337–47; Simon Maimela, "Black Theology," 111–19; and John Mbiti, "African Theology," 141–57.

[8] Later writers, among them Brett Bailey, Chris Mann, Marguerite Poland, Etienne van Heerden and Eben Venter, all respond to the impulse of this syncretic world view, even if they do not subscribe directly to the religious tenets forwarded by the African Initiated Churches.

Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion arrived in South Africa. However, internal conflicts in their own church led to their return to the United States of America by 1908. The Zionist missionaries were therefore in Africa for a relatively short period of time, and although the churches they established flourished in their absence, their long-term influence on day-to-day affairs of the churches was negligible. Their converts continued to preach a more spirit-oriented (Zionist) theology and the local Zionist evangelists did their work without any formal theological training in the western sense. Later, many African Initiated Churches were influenced by the Africanist teachings of Marcus Garvey.[9] Garvey's Africanist philosophy manifested itself in political resistance that is exemplified most strikingly by the massacre of the Israelite sect at Bulhoek in 1920.[10]

Where these African Initiated Churches diverged most significantly from their western-based parent churches was in their emphasis on the Spirit (Anderson, "African Initiated Church Hermeneutics" 400). For many Africans, the attraction of these churches lay in the fact that "Zionist missionaries healed by prayer alone" (Hayes 162). This holistic approach to healing echoed a traditional approach to healing in which sickness was integrally tied to a person's behaviour and his or her relationship with the ancestral spirits.[11] Allan Anderson's remarks about social and political changes that occurred in the 1960s are equally relevant to the reasons for the initial formation of these churches:

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[9] Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) was born in Jamaica. At the age of 14, he moved to Kingston, where he worked in a print shop. Appalled by the living conditions of the labour classes, he soon became involved in social reform. After starting a newspaper, *The Watchman*, he travelled widely in Central and South America, gathering evidence on racial discrimination. He subsequently worked in England, where he read more about the history of Africa. In 1914, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and at the organization's first convention in New York in 1920, Garvey outlined his plan to build an African nation-state and he used his newspaper, the *Negro World*, as a platform for his political views. Although his organization failed and he was eventually convicted of financial mismanagement and deported to Jamaica, his message of African nationalism remained popular and his impact on twentieth-century African-American thought was considerable. His organization also had several branches around the world, including South Africa and Namibia, where his message of African redemption and the restoration of African political sovereignty struck an obvious cord with nationalist-oriented Africans. His ideas were the main ideological basis at the 5th Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England in 1945. The attendees included George Padmore and W.E.B. du Bois of the United States of America, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria.

[10] See Robert Edgar, "The Fifth Seal: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites and the Bulhoek Massacre, 1921," Ph.D. Diss., U of California, 1977; and Robert Edgar, *Because They Chose the Plan of God* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988) for detailed accounts of the Bulhoek massacre and its political implications.

> The rapid increase in urbanisation…and the insecurities inherent in the urbanization process provide strong incentives for people to seek new, culturally and socially meaningful religious expression. The rejection of "white" values and religious expressions such as found in mission churches...could also be contributing factors. ("African Initiated Church Hermeneutics" 401)[12]

The fact that these churches provided "biblical answers for 'this worldly' needs like sickness, poverty, hunger, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery" reflects a proximity to traditional religious concepts that made Christianity more acceptable to Africans.[13] The African Initiated Churches are often described as "syncretistic" and denounced by western theologians because of their ability to incorporate aspects of traditional religion into a Christian framework. In the words of Wardlow, the teacher at Blauwildebeestfontein, where Davie Crawfurd's trading post is located in *Prester John*, "The Kaffir finds it an easy job to mix Christian emotion and pagan practice" (54). Such "mixing," it could be argued, are attempts at engaging in *ukuhlangana*—at mixing seemingly disparate spiritual elements. Yet it is precisely the syncretistic nature of these churches that has made them the fastest-growing churches in Africa.[14]

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[11] Stephen Hayes makes the significant point that the early European missionaries approached their ministry with a post-Enlightenment view of sickness ("African Initiated Church Theology" 162). One of the effects was therefore to emphasize the scientific nature of medical healing, thus drawing a clear distinction between physical illness and spiritual well-being. Healing by prayer alone, however, emphasises the spiritual aspect of the healing process and thus aligns such an approach with a more holistic world view in which the distinctions between science and religion, between body and spirit, become blurred. The incorporation of quasi-religious discourse into the realm of the social sciences therefore creates a tension that, for many, still remains unresolved.

[12] Anderson's point about the desire to look for new forms of religious expression echoes the findings made by J.S. Cumpsty in "A Model of Religious Change in Socio-Cultural Disturbance," *Religion in Southern Africa* 1.2 (1980): 59–70.

[13] Hayes notes that most of the early converts were converted as a result of the efforts of African missionaries rather than those of the European missionaries who initially brought the word to Africa ("African Initiated Church Theology" 162). He concludes that the message they taught was soon "contextualized" and interpreted in ways that were more readily understood by Africans.

Even during the early years of the African Initiated Churches, their political dimension was unmistakable.[15] In the years following the South African War, Africans tried desperately to find a forum through which to voice unified political resistance. Tim Couzens cites an article from *Leihlo la Babatsho* [The Native Eye] of May 1904, in which the writer draws an explicit connection between political power and religion:

> Where is the great Church, "The Dutch Reformed Church", the Church of the Boers? It is now turned into a parliament. Where is the Great Ethiopia, the great teacher of Kafirs? She is divided and today springs out of her a branch of Zionism!! Union is strength;—United, we stand; divided we fall. ("The Old Africa" 13)

The call for African political unity is linked to the need for spiritual unity, and the Dutch Reformed Church is held up as a model to show how effectively religion can be mobilized as a political force.[16] Tim Couzens notes that Milner himself thought that

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[14] Allan Anderson emphasises this fact by quoting a number of comments by members of the Zionist Churches that reveal their appreciation for the fact that the church actively encourages them to maintain traditional practices; the comments also highlight the fact that many people are called to the church through ancestral visitations (402).

[15] The interplay between Christianity, tradition and ideology in the African Initiated Churches is perhaps best illustrated in the hymn Isaiah Shembe composed for use in Ibandla lamaNazaretha [The Church of the Nazarites], a Church founded by Shembe in the 1930s. Duncan Brown discusses Shembe's work in depth in "Orality and Christianity: The Hymns of Isaiah Shembe and the Church of the Nazarites," *Voicing the Text* 119–64.

[16] It is tempting to consider here the correlation between the views held by the writer of this article and Nzululwazi's (pseud. S.E.K. Mqhayi) arguments relating to the Great Trek in "Isifundo semfuduko yambhulu" [The Great Trek of the Boers], *Umteteli Wa*

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Ethiopianism was "ostensibly of a purely religious nature, [but that] there are grounds for supposing that the aims are also social and political" (qtd in "The Old Africa" 17).

The ability of these churches to offer a solution to the disruption caused by urbanisation gave them a wider appeal that often stretched across increasingly entrenched racial barriers in South Africa. After the war, Afrikaners were also undergoing a rapid process of urbanisation and felt a similar sense of displacement as urbanized Africans. In the cities, many Afrikaners were beginning to desert the Dutch Reformed Church and move towards the more spiritually-oriented apostolic churches (Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words" 100), including some African Initiated Churches. Despite the African Initiated Churches' original aim of division along racial lines, the opposite in fact occurred in urban areas such as Johannesburg, where there were several mixed-race Zionist congregations (Sundkler 13–67)—a fact that would undoubtedly have displeased the more conservative Calvinist Afrikaner ideologues.[17] In the context of a South African society that was moving towards a union of the provinces, white reaction to the political consciousness awakened by the African Initiated Church movements is important, and

> to see this consciousness (Ethiopianism) in terms of two distinct ideological traditions overlooks the structural context in which it developed; in addition, it neglects the various responses to the white-controlled state and the European missions to the ideological challenge presented by the Ethiopian movement. Thus to analyse Ethiopianism also means accounting for the white response of segregationism, and the class hegemony this sustained. (Rich, qtd in Couzens, "The Old Africa" 15)

The ability of the African-initiated religious movements to alter and overturn Eurocentric theological and ideological preconceptions presented a significant danger in the eyes of

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Bantu, 17 Sept. 1927.

[17] Some white missionaries, such as Joseph Booth, also founded Ethiopian-styled churches. It was Booth's disciple in the African Christian Union that led the Chilembwe uprising in Nyasaland in 1915. As Tim Couzens points out, Buchan's novel foreshadowed this event ("The Old Africa" 15, n. 16).

imperial politicians such as Buchan, for whom "Ethiopianism" was a dangerous adaptation of a Eurocentric Christian tradition that upset the delicate chain of being set in place by the theories of Social Darwinism. The ready incorporation of African traditions and world views into these churches also threatened to undo the separation of mind and body that was accepted in a European post-Enlightenment world view—in addition to which the creation of mixed-race congregations contradicted their own segregationist agenda. In essence, what disturbed white politicians in South Africa most was the potential of *ukuhlangana*, as practised in these churches, to undermine a carefully cultivated sense of European superiority and along with this, a segregationist ideology.

As David Daniell notes, *Prester John* is a profoundly religious text—but not in the way he suggests. It is a text in which African-initiated religion represents a very real threat to the European world view, and thus quelling the African rebellion (led and instigated by the "Ethiopian" theologian, Laputa) is of utmost importance (Daniell 146).[18] Shortly after Davie Crawfurd's arrival at Blauwildebeestfontein, he and the teacher, Wardlow, discuss the possibility of an African insurrection:

> Wardlow admitted [that the Africans would not be able to find a leader in the warrior mould of Shaka], but said that there might be other kinds of leaders. He had been reading a lot about Ethiopianism, which educated American Negroes had been trying to preach in South Africa. He did not see why a kind of bastard Christianity should not be the motive of an uprising. (*Prester John* 54)

Tim Couzens has indicated that, historically, Buchan could have used any one of several incidents of African resistance as source material for his fictional revolt ("The Old Africa" 1–14), yet in *Prester John* he does not make any of these historical events the cause of the insurrection. Here, it is Laputa's "bastardized Christianity" (54) that presents the biggest threat, for it is the most imperceptible and consequently most capable of causing great harm. Whereas the African, represented by Laputa, is able to find some form of synthesis between two divergent world views, of becoming *umhlanganisi*, the European colonial in *Prester John* resists the possibility of religious syncretism—a resistance that consciously counters what was in fact occurring in some urban communities.

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[18] In *Prester John*, Buchan refers only to Ethiopianism, but incorporates elements of both the Zionist and Pan-Africanist traditions and Laputa's theology (72–74).

Davie Crawfurd first encounters John Laputa, the African minister, where he is "practising exotic chants on the sea shore of his home in the town of Kirkcaple" (Rich, "Romance and the Development" 127). Rich notes that for Buchan, Laputa

> embodies many of the threatening qualities of the educated or half-educated African, on the one hand maintaining an outward appearance of social respectability dressed in the black garments of a preacher, while on the other hand invoking the latent qualities of savagery.[19]

While Rich correctly attributes this depiction to Buchan's attempts to establish a segregationist discourse, it also places the notion of African cosmology and religious practice at the heart of what threatens the Empire. What Buchan fears most is the intrusion of African "savagery" into the domain of western thought. The ease with which African religious concepts were incorporated into an African interpretation of Christianity points to the inherent danger of the missionary enterprise: if the holiest of holies—a Christian world view—can be penetrated by "savage" customs, then how much more easily can the secular world of the empire crumble?[20]

The fear of racial integration is embodied not just in a fear of miscegenation or political integration, but in the danger of accepting the legitimacy of African custom, as Buchan clearly suggests at the start of *Prester John*:

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[19] Craig Smith ("Every Man Must Kill the Thing He Loves") discusses at length the ambivalence inherent in Davie Crawfurd's relationship with Laputa. Smith links the ambivalence and alternation between admiration and rejection as representative of homoerotic desire in the novel.

[20] The perceived threat of Zionism is repeated again in Plomer. The African resistance needs to be broken and the revolt dealt with firmly. The real danger lies in producing an Africa that is devoid of Christian spirituality, thus Laputa's danger.

> There was something desperately uncanny about this great Negro, who had shed his clerical garments, and was now practising some strange magical art alone by the sea. I had no doubt that it was the black art, for there was that in the air and the scene which spelled the unlawful. As we watched, the circles stopped, and the man threw something on the fire. A thick smoke rose of which we could feel the aromatic scent, and when it was gone, the flame burned with a silvery blueness like moonlight. Still no sound came from the minister, but he took something from his belt, and began to make odd markings in the sand between the inner circle and the fire. As he turned the moon gleamed on the implement, and we saw it was a great knife. (13)

In this European environment, in the heart of Scotland,[21] Buchan's representation of Laputa's "black art" is conceived in the western mind and nurtured in accordance with a western notion of evil. Performed in solitude on a deserted beach, Laputa's African rituals "spelled the unlawful" and epitomize illegality and wrongfulness. As if to underscore Laputa's own acknowledgement of the wrongfulness of his acts, he pursues the boys in what is clearly intended as an effort to kill the two young boys who had watched him. Laputa's evil ritual therefore culminates in an attempt to destroy Davie Crawfurd, who is soon to become the exemplary colonial in the book, the bearer of Western civilization. The events serve their purpose well: from the start, Laputa is identified as the source of evil, and the future of the white man in Africa depends on exterminating this brute.[22]

Despite the horror of beholding the African savage, Buchan feels a maddening desire to become part of his ritual. Through Davie Crawfurd's ambivalent, homo-social relationship with Laputa (Smith, "Every Man must Kill the Thing He Loves"), Buchan reflects the torn sensibility of the colonial who both rejects and acquiesces to African tradition, who recognises the failure of his own conceptualization of the world to make sense of the changing environment around him, but finds himself unable to transcend the limits of his own historical prejudices. Crawfurd refuses to accept the urge to join in the ritual, presenting his reader with an almost Faustian dilemma: either remain civilized, or sell your soul to evil. In refusing to change his lifestyle or to become part of the ritual that plays out before his eyes, Davie Crawfurd rejects the possibility of becoming a *tussenskapper* in Jooste's sense of the term, and therefore cannot move towards a greater sense of belonging and finding a new spiritual home in Africa.

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[21] Peter Henshaw discusses the centrality of Scotland in Buchan's world view in "John Buchan From the 'Borders' to the 'Berg': Nature, Empire and White South African Identity, 1901-1910," *African Studies* 62.1 (2003): 3ff.

[22] Paul Rich, Tim Couzens and Craig Smith all deal with the relationship between Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Buchan's *Prester John* in their work, and it is therefore unnecessary to dwell on the interplay between the texts here.

Ultimately, what is at stake in both *The African Colony* and *Prester John* is the ability to present a legitimate claim to the land, and this is possible only by conquering the local people and subsequently maintaining European values in Africa. Britain, Buchan argued in *The African Colony*, succeeded as a colonial power only "because her sons find a land of their adoption" (29).[23] Buchan notes that for him, "to colonise is to decentralise." By this he does not mean decentralisation in the way that van Wyk Louw does (that is, an inversion of the metropolitan gaze onto a new centre that reflects that of the metropolis, and out of which an independent identity can arise), but a wholesale transplanting of the metropole and its value systems into the colony. As Buchan puts it:

> Wars of separation may come, but a colony is still a colony: it may have a different colour on the map, but its moral complexion is the same; politically it may be a rival, spiritually it remains a daughter. (30)

Colonization is therefore more than mere physical possession. It necessarily penetrates the psyche and eternally mirrors the desire of the "mother" nation. Africa therefore becomes a revitalized version of Europe that can serve as a site in which the tired philosophies of Europe can be regenerated and invigorated. For this reason, any form of miscegenation in the colonies—whether carnal, religious, or intellectual—is undesirable.

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[23] The passage also echoes the words of the 1820 settler, H.H. Dugmore, to the effect that the settlers had to "take root or die"—a phrase taken up in 1970 by Guy Butler in his play, *Take Root or Die* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1970).

By contrast, Buchan argued, Portuguese colonization in Africa had failed largely because the European metropolis did not maintain a steady interest in the "daughter" colony, and so,

> forgotten by Europe, they [the Portuguese] forgot Europe in turn, and a strange somnolent life began of half-barbaric, wholly oriental seigneurs, ruling as petty monarchs over natives from whom they were not wholly distinct. Instead of holding the outposts of European culture, they sank themselves into the ways of the soil which their forefathers had conquered.... The white man's pride died in their hearts. They were ready to mix with natives on equal terms. (*The African Colony* 27–28)

If Davie Crawfurd exemplifies the colonial's ability (and need) to resist the temptation of Africa, then Henriques, the Portuguese trader in the novel, represents Buchan's effort to show the danger inherent in succumbing to the lure of Africa, the danger of becoming *umhlanganisi*.[24] The vilified and despised Henriques manifests the culmination of the perceived degradation of the European too long exposed to an uncaring European mother nation. He joins Laputa's failed rebellion and attends the ordination of Laputa as the High Priest in the cave. Like his leader, Henriques vacillates between moments of insight and a complete failure to comprehend the ways of the European mind. He has reached the point where, "a Kaffir he is in everything but Kaffir virtues" (152), and Europe is no longer central to whatever bastardized philosophical outlook he represents. In short, having "forgotten Europe," he has begun the descent into barbarism.

Although Buchan does not explicitly make the connection in *Prester John*, his characterization of Henriques, as well as his remarks about the Portuguese settlers being "not wholly distinct" from the natives, brings to mind John Barrow's infamous remark nearly a century earlier about the colonial Dutch farmers who were "unwilling to work, and unable to think, with a mind disengaged from every sort of care and reflexion" and who lived "entirely in the society of Hottentots" (qtd in Smith, *Grounds of Contest* 4).

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[24] The representation of the Portuguese in British novels of empire is explored more fully by Maria Theresia Pinto Coehlo in her article, "The Image of the Portuguese in the British Novel of Empire: *King Solomon's Mines* and *Prester John*," *Colonizer and Colonized*, ed. Theo D'Haen and Patricia Krüs (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 357–69.

It was not only the African elite, represented by men like Laputa and his fellow Zionist leaders, who displayed an unhealthy and dangerous interest in education. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Afrikaner intellectuals had attempted to cast off the memory of Europe and fashion an independent sense of identity rooted in Africa. This first wave of Afrikaner nationalism had not left a great impact on the political landscape, but a second wave of politicised intellectuals that emerged after the South African War presented a greater threat. In the aftermath of the war, Afrikaners were groping for different strategies to promote unity among white Afrikaans-speaking people and to overcome the perceived disintegration of the society they had known. The narrow republicanism of Paul Kruger in the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (postwar Transvaal) had not succeeded in bringing together Afrikaners in the north and in the south and a major concern in the postwar debates was to devise a strategy by which Afrikaners would be able to exercise majority rule in the new Union after 1910. The British colonial government stressed co-operation between British and Boer, and, under Lord Milner, instituted a deliberate policy of Anglicisation aimed at eroding the Afrikaner support base and consolidating white support for British imperialism. It also worked consciously towards creating new national symbols, emphasising white unity and merging the separate government bodies of the various Boer Republics and the Cape Colony into a single structure. Such a period of social reconstruction, historians have pointed out, provides fertile ground for the development of nationalist causes, as it promotes a sense of commonality among communities that would normally be divided.[25]

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[25] See G. Eley, "Nationalism and Social History" (*Social History* 6.1 [1981]: 83–107). After 1994, the ANC government exploited similar strategies to unite previously divided communities. It also called on writers to actively promote a sense of unity. It comes as no surprise that "post-apartheid" literatures in South Africa largely emphasise commonalities rather than differences between the people who inhabit the country. At the same time, the government actively supports the "rediscovery" of the linguistic heritage of various language groups. In this regard, see the stated aims of the Pan-South

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The Afrikaans petite bourgeoisie, shunned by the more overtly pro-English Dutch elites, baulked at the notion of reconciliation. While Afrikaners were growing increasingly racist in their views, they were equally opposed to fraternising with the enemy and strengthening ties with the British—the wounds of the War were still too fresh. Their primary aim was to find a way in which to draw white Afrikaner votes to their cause. While one should not ignore the religious aspects involved in Afrikaner identity formation in this time, it is important to note, as Hofmeyr explains, that "the simultaneity of middle-class philanthropic 'intervention' and nationalist discourse is crucial to grasp since many other commentators have attributed to Afrikaners a particular propensity for being more religious and moral than the rest of society" ("Building a Nation" 103).

The traditional agrarian structures of the Afrikaner society had collapsed subsequent to the South African War, resulting in increased urbanisation. The sudden influx of Afrikaner families into the cities in the aftermath of the War left a largely urban population, with its traditions still rooted in the rural, searching for identity.[26] By eulogizing the past, writers could create a mythology to which they could turn for comfort. The history on which urban Afrikaners drew in years to come, and which fuelled the imagination of later Nationalists, was largely based on a mythology of events. Daniel Francois Malan, later to become the first prime minister of apartheid South

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African Language Board (PANSALB).

[26] It is clear, therefore, that Afrikaner nationalism was predicated on a period of urbanisation and industrialisation, as Tom Nairn points out with regard to the British experience:

> We have all studied the phenomena so consistently accompanying [nationalism]: the "rediscovery" or invention of national history, urban intellectuals invoking peasant virtues which they have experienced only through train windows on their summer holiday, schoolmasters painfully acquiring "national" tongues spoken only in remote valleys...and so on. *(The Break-up of Britain* [London: NLB and Verso] 340.

Africa, led the early struggle for the recognition of Afrikaans as a language of government. His biggest task lay in convincing the more conservative pro-Dutch elements in the community that Afrikaans was a vehicle capable of conveying nationalist sentiments. His speech at the 1908 meeting of the Afrikaans Language Movement argued that Afrikaans was the only really viable language through which to convey Afrikaner sentiment:

> A linguistic expert can no more create a living language than a chemist can create life in his laboratory.... A living powerful language is born from the soil of the People's heart [*volkshart*] and the People's history [*volksgeskiedenis*] and lives only in the mouth of the People [*volksmond*]. No People ever chooses its spoken language, or indeed, its written language, on the advice of experts. People and languages are born together.... Give the young Afrikaner a written language that is easy and natural for him, and you will thereby have set up a bulwark against the anglicisation of our people.... Raise the Afrikaans language to a written language, and you will raise the People to a feeling of self-respect and to the calling to take a worthier place in the world civilization.... A healthy national feeling can only be rooted in ethnic [*volks*] art and science, ethnic customs and character, ethnic language and ethnic religion and, not least, in ethnic literature. (qtd in Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* 47)[27]

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[27] Not all Afrikaans writers shared Malan's views. In the introduction to *Susanna Reyniers: Blijspel* (Amsterdam and Pretoria: J.H. de Bussy, 1908) Adriaan Francken wrote:

> Die verscheidenheid [van taalveromen] geeft een vrij juist beeld van de taaltoestand hier te lande, zodat het elk verstandig man voorbarig voorkomt om nu al te gaan spreken van zo iets als een "Afrikaanse Letterkunde." Die Letterkunde moet nog komen en een Afrikaans, dat men *het* Afrikaans zou willen noemen, bestaat nog niet en mag volgens het meerendeel van gezaghebbende Afrikaners niet onstaan zonder de machtige inwerking en medewerking van het Nederlands.
>
> [The variety (of linguistic forms) presents a fairly accurate image of the linguistic position here, so that it would be presumptuous for any sensible man to yet speak of anything like an "Afrikaans Literature." That Literature still needs to arrive and (a form of) Afrikaans, that one would wish to call *the* Afrikaans, does not yet exist and

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In 1915, a year after the formation of the National Party, Malan also opened the doors of the Nasionale Pers, the first Afrikaans-language press. The Nasionale Pers worked tirelessly to promote Afrikaans writing, wooing emerging writers by offering numerous writing competitions that were centred on "Afrikaans" themes and concerns. The press attempted to establish as wide a base as possible so that they could reach a greater number of readers.

One of the first books published by Malan's Nasionale Pers was Joubert Reitz's *Die dolos gooier* [The Thrower of Bones] (1916).[28] Like du Toit in *Di koningin fan Skeba* (1898) and Buchan in *Prester John* (1910), access to Africa's legendary wealth, as much as to the land itself, lay at the heart of Joubert Reitz's story. In *Die dolos gooier*, the discomfort with African magico-religious ritual suggested by Henni's incredulousness at the possibility embedded in the igqira's prophecies in *Di koningin fan Skeba* is taken a step further as the author intervenes to comment on the practice of traditional divining.

Fritz Kok, a clerk in Johannesburg, goes to the diamond fields in Bloemhof to seek his fortune. However, riches elude him, and he decides to leave the diggings and return to Johannesburg. As he prepares to leave, his African assistant, Jonas, informs him that he had thrown the bones and that they had told him of a fortune that awaited Fritz at the diggings. Jonas immediately provides authority for his reading of the bones by stating that

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> according to the majority of Afrikaners who have authority (in such matters), cannot become a reality without the powerful intrusion and co-operation of Dutch.]

n.p.

[28] In *Die Prosa van die Tweede Afrikaanse Beweging* [The Prose of the Second Afrikaans Movement] (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1922) 116, P.C. Schoonees suggests that Reitz developed the plot and the outline for the novel and that J.H. Malan subsequently edited the language and filled out remaining sections and, "in short, rewrote the whole book while retaining the original intrigue" (my translation).

> My pa, en sy pa en sy oupa voor hom was dokter gewees en as ek huis toe gaan sal ek ook dokter wees. Die dolos hy kan nie lieg nie.
>
> [My father, and his father and his grandfather before him were all doctor [sic] and when I go home, I too, will be doctor. The bones, they cannot lie.]
>
> (50)

Fritz replies that he does not believe in the bones, yet he is intrigued and asks Jonas to throw the bones again so that he can see for himself. Jonas is hesitant, for sometimes the bones refuse to talk—just as they were reluctant to reveal their message for a second time in *Di koningin fan Skeba* (15). It is almost as if both writers suggest that Africa is withholding information wilfully and maliciously; or that the entire concept of asking for the intercession of the ancestors through the bones is preposterous and fraudulent. In the end, however, Fritz bribes Jonas and he fetches his divining bones:

> Toe hy terugkom het hy 'n katvelsakkie, die inhoud waarvan hy voor Fritz op die grond gooi. Daar was 'n mengsel van dinge wat 'n mens gewoonlik op 'n ashoop sou sien: klein dolosse, kneukelbene,[29] klippe stukkies koper, spykers, 'n martini-henry koeël met 'n gat daardeur geboor, 'n paar krale, twee beestande, en nog 'n spul meer, en alles blink van ouderdom.
>
> …
>
> Die dolosse, moet julle weet, is by die kafferdokter die mantel wat hy nalaat aan die seun wat hom as dokter moet opvolg, 'n soort van sertifikaat van dokterskap en 'n erfenis van geslag tot geslag.[30]
>
> …
>
> Jonas gaan voor die spul op sy knieë en hou 'n lang preek, of vertel 'n

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[29] The *dolos* is generally the knucklebone of an ungulate. The literal translation, "knucklebone" does not reflect the connotative meaning of this word as "divining-bone." The narrator's distinction between the knucklebone and the "divining-bones" is technically inaccurate, as they are in fact the same. The distinction is drawn to set the magico-religious properties of the *dolos* apart, to emphasise its difference from ordinary bones.

[30] This is incorrect. The traditional healer is called and the title or the profession is not passed down through the generations, although certain families do have a propensity for being called through the experience of *ukuthwasa*.

> storie, of mompel 'n gebedjie. Fritz kon nie se nie, waarheen die fratse dwing, want dit was in die kaffertaal.
>
> Daarna neem hy die rommel in sy twee hande op, skud hulle 'n bietjie, toe hy weer aan brabbel gaan in sy taal en maak toe, op 'n hoogte van omtrent twee voet van die grond af, skielik sy hande ope en laat die hele spul op die grond val.
>
> [When he returned, he had a cat skin bag, the contents of which he threw on the ground before Fritz. There was a mixture of things one would generally find on a rubbish dump: small dolosse, knucklebones,[29] stones, small pieces of copper, nails, a Martini-Henry bullet with a hole drilled through it, a few beads, two cows' teeth, and plenty more, everything shiny with age.
> …
> These dolosse, you need to know, are the mantle which a kaffir doctor leaves to his son who is to follow him, a certificate of his profession and an inheritance from generation to generation."[30]
> …
> Jonas fell to his knees in front of the stuff and held a long sermon, or told a story, or mumbled a prayer. Fritz could not tell whither the buffoonery pointed, for it was in the kaffir language.
>
> Afterwards, he took the rubble in both his hands, shook it, began to babble again, and then, at a height of about two feet, opened his hands and let the whole lot tumble to the ground.]
>
> (*Dolos gooier* 51–52)

Jonas then commences his reading of the bones. As Fritz listens to the revelation contained in the bones, he sits with his back to the claim, facing east.[31] Through the bones, Jonas reveals to Fritz the possibility of a new life: wealth and a wife. This "rebirth" is indelibly drawn into the African soil by the bones. But the revelation is only fleeting, and will disappear as soon as Jonas collects his bones. Africa does not share its knowledge freely and does not repeat the same information, as indicated by Jonas's stubborn insistence that the "die dolos hij is nou kwaad. Hij wil nie meer praat nie (54—"the dolos he is now angry. He does not want to speak"). These bones of the ancestors do not extend their invitation twice, and if the Afrikaner is to carve out an indelible identity for himself on the African soil, now is the time to do so. Yet Fritz does not fully understand the wrath of the ancestral bones. Jonas's refusal to throw his bones again fuels Fritz's own scepticism and his rationalisation of the events. He stubbornly refuses to accept the potential of the bones, despite the fact that both of the predictions Jonas makes eventually come true.

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[31] Within Xhosa cosmology, the east is associated with the myths of origin, the place where man emerged from a primeval hole. See chapter 1 of Janet Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1982) for a discussion of the creation myths of the Xhosa. See also J.H. Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press,1931).

It is his failure to understand and accept African cosmology that prevents Fritz from readily identifying with Africa and establishing a permanent sense of identity based in the continent. The bones reflect a rebirth drawn from the African soil and inscribe the image of the white man onto the soil: there, patterned on the ground, lies the identity he came to seek. It is through the bones that an African cosmology and the possibility of becoming *umhlanganisi*, or *tussenskapper*, is revealed. Yet the potential contained in this moment is tenuous at best, for although Fritz's identity is revealed to him in ways he does not/cannot understand, the narrator tells us that this possibility should be rejected:

> Nou moet jul weet, dat ek net so min glo aan dolosgooi as aan mense wat voorgee dat hulle die toekoms uit kaarte uit kan voorspel of uit die sogenaamde kristalkykery. Hoe dit ook al sy, ek het al wonderlike dinge self gehoor van 'n dolos gooier, dinge wat my stom laat staan het en wat ek tot vandag toe nie kan verstaan nie. Ek kan dit net uitle deur die gedagte dat 'n dolos gooier dit nooit waag om vir iemand dolos te gooi voordat hy hom van al die moontlike informasie ingewin het wat in te win is en dat hy daarby nog op die uiterste mate die kuns besit om wonderlik reg te raai. Maar ek sal julle sy voorspelling se, dan kan julle dit uitle soos julle wil, want ek kan dit nie doen nie.
>
> "Kyk, basie," sê hy, "hierdie twee klip [sic] wat na die kleim se kant toe le, se daar is daaimans. Die koeel se hul is swaar, en baie geld werd. Die dolos hy lieg nie baas. Baas sal jammer wees as hy wegggaan."
>
> Fritz sit 'n tyd en dink, en toe vra hy: "en daardie twee dolosse en die kneukelbeen, wat se hulle?"

> "Hulle wys vir Baas. Hulle se ek sal Baas eendag in my land kom kry."
>
> [Now you must know that I don't believe in throwing bones, just as little as I believe people who hold that they can predict the future by reading cards or by peering into a crystal ball. Be that as it may, I have myself heard wondrous things from a bone-thrower, things that left me speechless and which I cannot understand even today. I can only explain it by suggesting that the bone-thrower does not dare to throw his bones for anyone unless he has collected all the information there is to collect from him and that, in addition, he possesses in the extreme the art of making wonderfully calculated guesses. But I will tell you his prediction, then you can interpret it as you wish, because that I cannot do.
>
> "Look, basie," he said, "these two stone [sic] that face the claim, they say there are diamins. The bullet says they are heavy, and worth lots of money. The dolos does not lie baas. Baas will be sorry if he leaves."
>
> Fritz sat thinking for a while, then he asked: "And those two dolosse there, and the knucklebone, what do they say?"
>
> "They show you, Baas. They say I will find Baas in my country one day."]

(53)

Whereas Mr du Toit in *Di koningin fan Skeba* still believed and appeared to accept his implication in the process of calling on the spirits of the ancestors, the narrator in *Die dolos gooier* openly refrains from any engagement with African tradition. Yet he, too, cannot explain some of the happenings, and like the narrator in *Di koningin fan Skeba*, ascribes the diviner's abilities to a level of fortunate guesswork. Fritz, too, tries to rationalize his experience. He realises that Jonas had no way of knowing about the girl on the train and his desire to marry her. Yet, he argues, the prediction was a calculated guess: Jonas would have wanted those things (wealth for *lobola* and a wife) for himself, and it is only natural that he should therefore project this same desire onto Fritz.

Faced with a similar dilemma to that which Davie Crawfurd faces in *Prester John*, Fritz Kok makes a different decision. Whereas Davie Crawfurd actively resists becoming part of Laputa's rituals, Fritz Kok engages with them, however sceptically. In the end, even though Fritz will not acknowledge it, the bones direct him away from the diamond fields towards the riches of Johannesburg: it is here, in the new African metropolis, that he is able to realize his identity fully. The author destabilises the western perspective by insisting that there is some unknowable part of Africa that can also reveal a truth. He may be unable to understand it and attempt desperately to rationalize it; but that does not diminish its presence. In fact, in *Die dolos gooier* the presence of the unknown mythico-religious element is precisely what allows Fritz to re-inscribe his identity in the way he wants to. By dabbling, however innocently, in what Buchan's Davie Crawfurd calls "black arts" (*Prester John* 19), Fritz Kok rocks the foundations of western Calvinism and destabilizes this accepted centre, thus opening up the possibility of an alternative future in which the Afrikaner is able to renegotiate a sense of belonging on the African continent.

By engaging with an African world view, by following the dictates of the dolosse, he moves towards becoming a *tussenskapper*, someone who is willing to make a mental and spiritual transition into Africa. However, Fritz is not entirely willing or able to make the transition completely and so, while the potential for a radical shift in his sense of belonging is presented to him, it remains potential, for despite his willingness to engage with African cosmologies in this way, he still resists changing his lifestyle completely in accordance with the divination of the bones.

The suggestion made in both *Di koningin fan Skeba* and *Die dolos gooier* that the *amagqira* and the bones of the ancestors are able to offer Afrikaners an alternative avenue for exploring their sense of belonging gains credibility and confirmation in a novel by Arthur Nuttall Fula. Fula was born in 1908 in East London, but his family moved to the Rand in 1910, where he grew up in the multilingual environment of George Goch township. In addition to his home language, isiXhosa, he learnt to speak isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana and sePedi, as well as English and Afrikaans. After completing high school, Fula began studying towards a degree in Education, but abandoned his studies as a result of financial difficulties. However, he continued to study in his spare time, teaching himself French. After years working as a labourer on the mines and as a furniture-maker, he found work as a court interpreter, an occupation that suited his linguistic abilities (Willemse 83).

Fula published his first novel, *Jôhannie giet die beeld*, in 1954 (trans. as *The Golden Magnet*, 1984). The novel aroused some interest from the critical establishment, mostly because of its novelty value as the first Afrikaans novel written by a black African.[32] By the time his second novel, *Met erbarming, o Here* [With Compassion, O Lord] appeared in 1957, the curiosity value attached to his work had faded and as a result Fula's work was—and still is—largely ignored. Several reviewers noted politely that the novel was significantly more complex than his first effort, which was a Jim-comes-to-Jo'burg style novel that calls to mind both F.A. Venter's *Swart Pelgrim* and Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country*. Yet, in the end at least one reviewer, Abel Coetzee, noted bluntly of his second novel that "plek-plek slaan die propaganda te erg deur" [in places, the propaganda comes through too obviously] ("Bestanddeel" 68).

Fula's decision to write in Afrikaans was a conscious one. He noted in an interview after the publication of *Jôhannie giet die beeld*, "if the Afrikaans-speaking people are to learn to know and understand us—we Black people—then our writers must write in Afrikaans" ("Native's Novel" n.p.). At a first glance, the rationale for using Afrikaans as a medium of expression appears to run contrary to the position taken by other African intellectuals such as Herbert Dhlomo, who had argued in favour of using English as a medium of expression ("The Language of National Drama") or Benedict Vilakazi who advocated writing in African languages ("African Drama and Poetry"). Where Dhlomo had written in English so that Africans could transcend the narrowness of their own tribal barriers and connect with the European metropole, Fula chose to remain local. Rather than shifting his gaze outwards in an attempt to engage with the

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[32] Fula produced several manuscripts in English as well as in Afrikaans. Several of his poems and short stories appeared in German and Russian translations, but were never published in the original Afrikaans. The whereabouts of the original Afrikaans versions are not known (See Barend Toerien, "Twee vergete Afrikaans skrywers [Two forgotten Afrikaans Writers]," *Vrye Weekblad* 30 Mar. 1990: 22.

European metropole, he invited white South Africans, as representatives of that metropole in Africa, to join in the possibility of a new, shared African modernity by engaging with the metropole in a language that had grown out of Africa: Afrikaans. Yet, like Dhlomo, Vilakazi, and other South African writers, his vision of a new African identity was based firmly on an interaction and mutual respect among the cultures of South Africa.

Abel Coetzee's objection to the "propaganda" contained in the novel is therefore as much a reference to Fula's underlying concern for African political rights as to the invitation for Afrikaners to change their current attitudes and to become part of a new dispensation. Fula sets up the parameters of his argument principally through his allegorical pairing and contrasting of characters. That *Met erbarming, o Here* is meant to serve as an object lesson for white South Africans is clear from the start, when two African nurses are awaiting the arrival of the white nurse, Miss Potgieter, whom they have given the nickname "Nobantoe" (Mother of the People). In an explanatory note, Fula writes:

> Nobantoe is die bynaam wat hulle aan een van die verantwoordelike blanke susters gegee het, omdat sy tuis is in Basoetoe en Zoeloe. Haar teenwoordigheid daar moedig die blankes aan om ook die Bantoetale aan te leer, om in staat te wees om ook met daardie mense in hulle eie taal te praat en dus hulle volle vertroue te wen.
>
> [Nobantoe is the nickname given to one of the responsible white sisters because she was at home in Sesotho and Zulu. Her presence there encouraged the other whites to also learn the African languages so that they will be able to speak with those people in their own language and thus win their full confidence.]
>
> (4)

Besides Nobantoe, the responsible white nurse, there is another respected white woman, Mrs. Thompson. She is a teacher at the local township school who also teaches Sunday School in the township church. Mrs. Thompson's philanthropy extends beyond the walls of the church and becomes a social conscience when she and her husband decide to sponsor the education of a young student at the school, Naledi. Responsibility (in the sense of gaining the confidence of the African people by learning to speak their languages and understanding their cultures) and philanthropy become the cornerstones on which, for Fula, white South Africans can successfully constitute a sense of belonging in Africa.

As if to underscore the embedded potential in responsibility and philanthropy to smooth over the fractured nature of interracial relations in apartheid South Africa, Fula contrasts the current divisive political status quo with the idyll of a bygone era. When Ouma Nomabhulu, a traditional healer, recalls her childhood during a discussion with her friends Nomvula and Memamaria, she describes a world that stands in stark contrast to the rigidity of the apartheid era[33]:

> "Die blanke kinders het ons op ons rug met ons rooi komberse vasgebind en die agakweta-danse [sic] saam met hulle gedans. Ons het vir die jonkmans wat uit die besnydenisskole kom, hande geklap en gesing.
>
> "Die ouers van die blanke kinders het nie gevra waarvandaan kom ons met hulle kinders nie, ofskoon hulle ook vol rooiklip was. Hulle was glad nie bekommerd nie. Ons verhouding was goed.
> …
> "O, in my dae het ons gelewe nie soos nou waar die verskillende rasse mekaar beledig, slaan, vloek en skop nie. Die witmense het ons vertrou, en ons het hulle vertrou," sluit die dame af.
>
> ["We fastened the white children to our backs in our ochre blankets and danced the abakwetha dances with them. We sang and danced for the young men who came out of the circumcision school.

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[33] The names of the women in the novel are suggestive: Nobantoe (Mother of the People); Nomabhulu (Mother of the Boers); Nomvula (She Brings Rain); and Memamaria (Mother of Maria). Nobantoe, the white woman, becomes the mother of the people, whereas the traditional healer, Nomabhulu, becomes mother of the Boers. This inversion underscores Fula's vision of an integrated, sharing community. Nomvula, the bringer of rain, makes her house available for a series of discussions that offer rain—relief—to a parched land. It is also the place where Naledi eventually comes to new insights regarding the value of traditional practices (102–103). Memamaria is a woman who knows how to protect babies against an evil spell, *thlogwana*, and her name, with its allusions to the Mother of Christ, who also has protective powers, suggests the ease with which apparently diverse religious beliefs can be amalgamated.

> "The parents of these white children did not ask us where we had been with their children, even though they too were covered in ochre. They were not at all worried. Our relationship was good.
> …
> "Oh, in my days we did not live as we do now when the different races insult and hit each other, swear at each other and kick each other. The white people trusted us, and we trusted them," the woman concluded.]

(14)

In this pre-apartheid idyll, white children themselves are covered with ochre, the symbol of Redness, and partake without questioning in the traditional rituals that symbolize the transition into adulthood. In this memory, white South Africans are not *tussenskappers* in search of a new identity; they have already made that transition and are indelibly part of African tradition. They are without doubt *abahlanganisi*, people who by choice move freely and comfortably between two worlds, just as their African counterparts do. Sadly, the old woman notes, this sense of one-ness, of *ubuntu*, is no longer. Yet in her recollection there remains the possibility of regaining this past idyll: during the ceremony that marks the end of the schooling period for the *amakrwala* (newly circumcised men), the young men burn their possessions and walk towards a new identity as adults. Likewise, South Africans can and should walk away from the political status quo towards adulthood as a nation by sharing the land—having literally daubed themselves in ochre clay in the past. Unfortunately, this idyll remains elusive because, as Nomabhulu reminds us at the start of the novel, "die witmense [glo] nie aan ons Bantoekruie as geneesmiddels…nie" [white people do not believe in our Bantu herbs as medicines] (10). It is only once white South Africans once more accept Africa and start believing in what Africa has to offer, that they will belong.

Although Fula is concerned about the dismissive attitude white South Africans display towards traditional practices, he is equally concerned about the evident disdain for traditional customs among urbanized Africans. The three women (Nomabhulu, Nomvula, and Memamaria) are awaiting the arrival of the roving township nurse on her daily round of duty. They wish fervently that Nobantoe will not send Lulu. During a previous visit, Nobantoe had gently reprimanded the women for availing themselves of traditional remedies by reminding them that doing so was against the law. By contrast, Lulu, the African nurse who accompanied her, had given them a stern lecture about the evils of traditional medicine, telling them that adherence to such practices was an impediment to African progress (12). Not without some glee, Memamaria points to Lulu's hypocrisy: despite her tirade against traditional herbal remedies, Lulu had recently been seen visiting a traditional healer's shop, where she bought *ithando*, a love potion, because she was having difficulties in her personal relationships. It appears the *ithando* had worked, for Lulu was about to get married.

Fortunately for the women, it is not Lulu that arrives, but sister Carolina Dhlamini. Although Carolina does not approve of what she calls "beengooiery en wortels" (7—bone-throwing and roots), she is more tolerant, as she realizes that if she is to work among her people, she cannot readily dismiss what she personally views as their antiquated customs. Her attitude to traditional medicine is far more ambivalent and she admits candidly that she does not know whether there is any merit in it, although her western medical training has taught her to be suspicious, largely because of a concomitant belief that traditional healers are untrained, ignorant quacks.

The philanthropy and responsibility of the white people, the adherence to traditional medicinal practices and the urban African ambivalence towards traditional medicine all converge in the life of a young girl, Naledi. From the start, her life is intimately connected to the entire community: Carolina Dhlamini acts as midwife and is the child's godmother (26); Memamaria announces the birth in traditional fashion and names the child Naledi (Star) on account of what she saw when she announced the birth.[34] As soon as the midwife departs after the birth of the child, Nomabhulu performs a traditional birth ritual (*ukukhutyazwa*) on the child and Memamaria protects her against *thlogwana* (28).

Naledi is a gifted child and when her teacher, Mrs. Thompson, spots her potential, she offers to help her with her studies so that she can achieve her ambition of becoming a doctor (37). The news that Naledi wants to be a doctor is met with excitement as well as with trepidation. Her mother, Nomvula, recalls that at Naledi's birth, an uncle had remarked that many of her forebears had been traditional healers. The propensity to become a traditional healer tends to run in families and Nomvula's biggest concern is that healers are called to their profession through an experience known as *ukuthwasa*. In a westernized world, *thwasa* is often interpreted as fits and is perceived as being representative of an emotional imbalance; however, *thwasa* is in fact a physical manifestation of a powerful calling from the ancestors. As soon as a person who experiences *thwasa* responds to the call of the ancestors and undergoes training as a traditional healer, emotional stability returns.[35] Nomvula's fear is that if Naledi is called to *thwasa*, she may be unable to complete her medical studies because the two traditions of healing appear incompatible to her. In this sense, Naledi experiences *tussenskap*, a state of being between two cultural traditions. Naledi's decision to become a doctor is not only a continuation of an ancestral family tradition, but also a significant departure from it: she does not *thwasa*, but makes the decision to become a doctor of her own volition.

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[34] The allusion to the Star of Bethlehem that guided the three wise men to the stable-crib of the newborn Christ-child, is not coincidental.

Naledi's decision has a significant influence on the perceptions of the township residents. Despite all the efforts of the doctors to administer medicine in the township, the people remain apprehensive and regard western medical practice as a continuation of an exploitative relationship. During their discussion about traditional medicine in Nomvula's house at the beginning of the novel, the women comment on a recent newspaper article in which western doctors had developed a vaccine based on a herb from Central Africa. They are quick to point to the underlying irony that while western medicine rejects traditional practice, its researchers readily return to Africa to explore the healing potential of African herbs. At the end of the discussion, Nomvula summarizes the exploitative nature of the relationship with the metropole:

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[35] Fula takes care to offer a detailed explanation of the *thwasa* (14–15). The ethnographic quality of Fula's explanation is reminiscent of H.M. Ndawo's descriptions of African festivities in *Uhambo lukaGqobhoka* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1909). See also the descriptions of Mncedisi's calling in Russell Kaschula's book, *Divine Dump Dancer* (Claremont: New Africa Books). The doctors at Valkenburg (a psychiatric hospital in Cape Town) want to keep Mncedisi under observation because of the fits he is experiencing. Despite their attentions and medication, he does not heal. When the exasperated parents finally take Mncedisi to see an *igqira*, they are told that the fits are a clear sign of *ukuthwasa*. Mncedisi returns to the Eastern Cape, to his roots, and there discovers his calling. At that point, the fits stop and the perceived psychological imbalance is rectified. After the initiation, he returns to Cape Town for further training. Finally at peace with himself, Mncedisi learns that it is possible to combine the traditional dances of the *thwasa* with his love for modern dancing.

> "Moeders, as ek die witmense beskou volgens hulle optrede, is hulle mense wat die murg uit 'n been stamp, en na hulle dit geniet het, die been weer sommer so weggooi. Daar sal later, as daar 'n ontdekking gedoen is, geen melding van die oorspronklike ou been gemaak word nie.
>
> ["Mothers, if I judge the white people according to their actions, they are people who knock the marrow out of a bone, and once they have enjoyed it, summarily discard the bone. Later, when a discovery is made, there will be no mention of the original old bone."]
>
> (14)

When Naledi qualifies, she soon realizes that if she is to make inroads into the community she lives in, she needs to understand their approach to medicine better. It is also a voyage of self-discovery for her, as she realizes that she knows very little about her own culture, despite knowing a lot about western medicine (103). She asks Nomabhulu to teach her more about traditional medicine and she herself begins to conduct research into the medicinal properties of the herbs. As Naledi learns more about the healing properties of the herbs and about a more holistic approach to medicine, she begins to incorporate traditional healing methods into her own medical practise and realizes to her shame how her people have hidden and disguised their traditions. Through this process of discovery, Naledi learns to become *umhlanganisi*, one who can successfully balance divergent traditions.

In return, Naledi helps Nomabhulu and the other members of the community to also become *abahlanganisi* by overcoming their mistrust of western medical practice. She achieves this by showing the other women images of bacteria under the microscope and explaining to them how western medicine works to kill the bacteria (131). Thus the two women, representatives of different generations, begin to develop a synthesis between their respective healing traditions, treating each other with mutual respect rather than with the disdain that had characterized the relationship between their respective healing traditions up to now. Rather than "discarding the bone" (14), as many doctors do, Naledi develops pride in the local and works not only to enrich the local community with the knowledge she acquires, but to promote her (rediscovered) traditions within the broader medical community.

The synthesis between traditional and western medicine that Naledi strives to achieve is paralleled in the deep sense of religion that permeates the novel. Mrs. Thompson acts out of a profound sense of religious responsibility when she takes Naledi under her wing; Nomabhulu and Memamaria both administer their respective blessings on the child from a deep-set conviction that this is what the ancestors demand and that the living should comply. Even at Naledi's birth, the reader becomes aware of the importance of religion to the community. As Carolina Dhlamini approaches Nomvula's house to deliver the baby, she encounters a group of Zionists praying for someone in their midst. Their public demonstration of their faith needs no further explanation: their faith symbolizes the kind of synthesis that, for Fula, lies at the heart of a modern African existence (26). Fula, like Dhlomo ("African Drama and Poetry") and also Du Toit in *Di koningin fan Skeba*, draws a link between ancient Hebrew culture and African traditional beliefs. Mr. Ntanga, Naledi's uncle, explains the basic tenets of traditional faith to the gathering at Nomvula's house:

> "…my eerlike sienswyse omtrent daardie saak is dat daar 'n groot ooreenkoms is met die ou Hebreeuse kultuur. Ons geloof was eenvoudig. God die Allerhoogste het ons geken, maar volgens gewoonte is Hy nie genader nie, tensy dit gedoen is deur die voorouers, wat die versoeke ten behoewe van hulle kinders voor die aangesig van die GROOT VADER gelê het. Om dit verder te vereenvoudig, sal ek so sê: om geseën te raak, moet jy eers jou ouers ken en gehoorsaam wees, voor jy die Allerhoogste sal ken wat jy nooit in die vlees sal sien nie. Dis nou juis op hierdie punt waar die dokter die skakel verskaf," sê die ou man.
>
> …
>
> "Waarvan ons voorouers voor die koms van die beskawing onbewus was, is die feit dat daar 'n Heiland bestaan, die lam van die Allerhoogste, die Verlosser van die wêreld, wat opgeoffer is vir die

> saligheid en die redding van die mensdom. Hy sal al die ellende van die volke van die wêreld verwyder, en die mensdom uit die afgrond van die verderf red," sluit die ou man geesdriftig af.[36]
>
> ["...my honest opinion about this matter is that there is a large measure of correspondence with ancient Hebrew culture. Our religion was simple. The Lord Almighty we knew, but according to custom, we did not approach Him, unless it was done by the ancestors who laid requests before the presence of the ALL FATHER on behalf of their children. To simplify it even more, I will put it this way: in order to be blessed, you first have to know and obey your parents before you can know the Almighty whom you will never see in the flesh. It is at this point that the doctor provides a link," the old man said.
> ...
> "what our ancestors were unaware of before the arrival of civilization, is the fact that there is a Messiah, the lamb of the Almighty, the Saviour of the world who was sacrificed for the sanctity and salvation of humankind. He will remove all the suffering of the nations of the world and save humanity from the abyss and damnation," the old man concluded enthusiastically.[36]]
>
> (24)

The old man Ntanga does not find any contradiction between traditional views and modern religion. To him, they form a continuum, a unified whole that can and should co-exist in modern times. In this, he is not far removed from the tenets of the Zionist Christian faith, which seek to combine elements of the traditional and modern Christianity. In the closing moments of the novel, Carolina Dhlamini and Naledi join in a festival in honour of the *amadhlozi* (146). The ease with which traditional praises are interspersed with Christian hymns suggests one moment in which we can see the interaction and collusion between the cultural traditions of South Africa.

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[36] Ntanga's statement here reflects closely the arguments made by H.I.E. Dhlomo in "African Drama and Poetry," The *South African Outlook* 69.1 (1939):88–90; reprinted in *English in Africa* 4.2 (1977): 13–17. In making the connection between *izibongo* and Hebrew poetry, Dhlomo relies on arguments made by John Drinkwater in an early edition of *The Outline of Literature* and a substantial, unidentified quote by Laurence Binyon on the nature of Hebrew poetry.

Despite the apparent ease with which the urbanized community in *Met erbarming, o Here* seems to find synthesis between the traditional and the modern, the tension between a rural and an urban culture, between an idealized and often distant past and the harsh reality of the present, remains strong to this day, and is often reflected in contemporary South African writing (Kaschula, "Iibhari nama-outi" 55–56). The country-city divide, often also representative of a divide between *amaqaba* and *amagogotya* (the educated and the illiterate), is a trope that appears in even the earliest Xhosa novels. In G.B. Sinxo's *uNomsa* (1922), the title character leaves her rural home to receive an education and become a teacher. Subsequently, she moves to the urban area of Richmond to further her career. However, in Richmond, she becomes embroiled in a tragic love-triangle. At the end of the novel, Nomsa and her lover, Themba, get married and return to the countryside, where Themba takes up his position as a headman. Sinxo maintains an ambivalent attitude to urbanization: going to Richmond is at once a step up on the social ladder, but Richmond is also a place of moral decay where Themba succumbs to the vice of alcohol and even contemplates suicide. The countryside, by contrast, represents an idyllic past, in which one of the only enduring needs appears to be a dire shortage of educated people. In the end, it is the hero's duty—in a manner reminiscent of the way in which those who have seen the reality of objects in Plato's allegory of the cave (*The Republic*, Book VII)—to return to the countryside and guide the hapless souls in the difficulties of negotiating the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional lifestyles.

The consequences of such a return may, however, not be all it is deemed to be in theory. In A.C. Jordan's classic novel, *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* (1940; trans. as *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, 1980), the hero of the story, Zwelinzima, is secreted away from the place of his birth as a young child in order to escape a murderous uncle who has set his eyes on the amaMpondomise kingship. Zwelinzima goes to school at Lovedale and is about to enter Fort Hare university when he is required to return to his ancestral home and take up his hereditary position as King of the amaMpondomise. Despite the objections of the traditionalist faction among his advisors who want him to marry a Thembu princess, the young king marries his sweetheart, Thembeka. Their education and urban experiences pit them against tradition (Kaschula, "Iibhari nama-outi" 61), and it is the way in which Thembeka and Zwelinzima cope with their acculturation upon their return to their rural roots that lies at the heart of the conflict in the novel.

The amaMpondomise in the novel are not an homogeneous group: some actively support the continuation of traditional ways, while others are more receptive to change. At the start of the novel, a group of men gather at Mzamo's house, where they feast and tell stories about the customs and traditions of the Mpondomise people. The discussion gradually gravitates towards a discussion of the various river-cemeteries along the Thina River, in which the Mpondomise kings lie buried. Ngxabane, an ardent traditionalist, remarks that anyone who dares to enter the waters of the Thina at these pools will surely die. In response, an irreverent Mzamo remarks that he used to swim in those pools. This riles the ardent traditionalist, Ngxabane, who then declares

> Lagqhibela ngokuthi umhlaba wemka nabeLungu nje, ngamaʃwanguʃwa eza noko kulahlwa kwamasiko.
>
> (*Ingqumbo* 7)

> [that it was because they had abandoned their ancient customs that the Mpondomise had suffered such great calamities and lost their land to the White man.]
>
> (*Wrath* 9)

It becomes evident as the novel progresses that despite a willingness to change and adapt to modern ways, the ancient traditions remain important. After all, the *iminyanya* are, as John Henderson Soga writes, "of all other forces that which preserves the unity of a tribe, and preserves it from disintegration" (*AmaXosa Customs*, 151). J.S. Mbiti underscores Soga's point when he writes that in traditional societies, "people…are likely to feel that any misfortune that befalls them is the logical result of their neglect of the spirits" (*African Religions and Philosophy* 82–83).

One of the biggest problems Zwelinzima faces as he contemplates whether to assume the kingship, or whether to pursue his studies at Lovedale, is that he feels alienated from his own traditions. He spends the night in contemplation:

> Yaba bubusuku beenyembezi neentsizi obo kuZwelinzima…. Into yokhukhosi yayise ifana nephupha kuye, kuba nangona azaziyo

> ukuba ungunyana kaZanemvula, engabazi nobo bukhosi…. UbuMpondomise wayebuthanda egazini yena, kuba wakhula ebaliselwa iimbali zamagorha eso sizwe, loo nto ke yamenza ukuba athi naxa sel' enakho ukuzifundela asoloko efuna ukwazi imo yeso sizwe sakowabo. Kodwa yonke loo nto yayise ifana nje nento yomntwana oliNgesi othanda ukufunda amabali kaKing Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, iyinto ekude, eluzizi; inje ngento yokuba angathi umntwana woMdaka waseMerika axalelwe ukuba ooyise-mkhulu babeziinkosi. Kodwa ingabikho ingqondo yokuba angaza abizelwe ukuba aye kuhlala kweso sihlalo sooyise-mkhulu.

Ingqumbo 35–36

> [It was a night of sorrow and tears for Zwelinzima…. To him, his chieftainship was no more than a distant dream because, although he had known all along that he was Zanemvula's son, such things had no reality for him. He had no memory of Zanemvula…. Of course he was proud of being Mpondomise, and from an early childhood he had listened avidly to the legends of the heroes of his people…. All this, however, could be likened to the love that an English child would have for the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the round Table—a love for something far and dim. Or it might be compared to the love of an Afro-American boy for Africa, the love of a boy who is proud to learn that his ancestors once reigned in Africa, but has never imagined that he would one day be invited to the royal seat of his forefathers.]

Wrath 35

Yet Zanemvula feels compelled to return and take up his hereditary duties. While he is able to recognize his duties and fulfil them once he assumes the kingship, he does so purely from an academic point of view, without any real grasp of the significance of his actions. He is, as Kaschula notes, "out of touch with the deeper values of Mpondomise culture" ("Iibhari nama-outi" 62). This is both his destiny and his tragedy.

By cutting short his education and returning home, he finds himself in-between cultures and identities. By Jooste's definition, a *tussenskapper* is characterized by inner strife, and has to choose between conflicting loyalties while searching for spiritual places of belonging in the midst of elusive certainty ("Vreemdelingskaptema" 140–41), and Zwelinzima fits this description well. He is, in many respects, a *tussenskapper*: he recognizes his duty, but also rejects many of the customs that will accompany his position as chief; it is his inner struggle that becomes a driving force in the narrative; Zwelinzima is not quite at home in his position of authority, but he is also no longer part of inner circles of the urbanized and educated, either. This ambivalence leads to some fatal errors of judgement, such as when he orders all the goats in the kingdom to be slaughtered. From a purely intellectual point of view, his decision had some merit, as the goats were destroying the vegetation and exacerbating the erosion and drought conditions. However, he does so also "because he wanted to show the people that the diviners [who demanded payment for their services in goats] were mere swindlers" (176). At a meeting of the Bhunga, the central governing body of the Transkei, the matter comes up for discussion, and is strongly opposed by a Thembu Chief. After the meeting, Zwelinzima goes to consult the Chief, to hear with his own ears if [he] really believed all that nonsense he had been talking about the goats" (179). The Thembu Chief's response is illuminating:

> "Ukuba ngaka ke, Jol'inkomo, ufuna ukwazi ukuba *inkosi yabaThembu* iyakholelwa na "kulaa ntʃwaqane," impendulo ithi "Ewe." Kanti ukuba ufuna ukwazi ukuba *mna*, *ingqobo yam*, ndiyakholelwa na, impendulo ngokungathandabuzekiyo ithi "Hayi." Uya ndiva?
>
> *Ingqumbo* 170

> ["Now, Jolinkomo, if you want to know whether or not the *Chief of the Thembu* people believes all that nonsense, as you call it, the answer is "Yes." But if you want to know whether I, as myself, believe it or not, then the answer is certainly "NO." Do you understand me?]
>
> *Wrath* 179

The Thembu chief has learned to negotiate the divide that Zwelinzima still needs to cross. Despite the knowledge he has about the actions of the goats, he also knows that for his people, the goats are an important part of their cultural practice, and so, for the sake of peaceful governance, he is prepared to maintain the illusion that he believes as well. What he realises is that he has to walk the tightrope between book-learned knowledge and tradition with care, and this is something that the young and inexperienced Zwelinzima does not acknowledge until it is too late.

Neglect and breaking with tradition are the two things that will inevitably incur the wrath of the ancestors. While Zwelinzima at least attempts to negotiate between his own acculturated beliefs and traditional practices, Thembeka stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the traditions. Her flagrant disregard for the ancestors culminates in the moment when she kills the *nkwakhwa*, the totem snake of the amaMpondomise. The *nkwakhwa* is the emissary of the ancestors and it is through the *nkwakhwa* that the people learn what the ancestors of the royal house wish them to do" (Nyamende, "Who really Cares" 22). On the fateful day, Thembeka arrived home, only to find a snake curled up in the cradle beside her child. Little realising that this visitation is in fact a great honour and a blessing bestowed by the ancestors on the royal household, Thembeka kills the snake, to the mortification of all present. Thembeka's action is tantamount to the ultimate rejection of the ancestors and a complete denial of tradition. The death of the *nkwakhwa* is the ultimate moment of alienation from tradition and of rejection of traditional values, and it is from this moment on that the wrath of the ancestors is felt most fervently.

As events catapult towards their inevitable conclusion, Zwelinzima wanders around the countryside, a mad king contemplating a course of action. Jongilanga, a stalwart traditionalist, suggests to Zwelinzima that there is only one course of action:

> "Linye qha ke ngoku ikroti. Elinokuyilamla ingadanga ihlangane. Nguwe. Lamla, mNtwan' enKosi. Nokuba idibene ngawe xa ihlanganayo, wafa wena, akusenani, ukuba ilamlekile. Mhlawumbi iya kothuswa sisidumbu sakho ise iyeka. Lenje njalo kakade ikroti. Ungubub'engwe sel' ekubonisile indlela."
>
> (*Ingqumbo* 220–21)
>
> ["There is one man, and one man only, who can intervene to prevent a clash of arms. And that is you, Child of Kings!! Save us! Even if you should be crushed to death between the opposing forces, it matters not, as long as calamity is averted from our people. It might be that the sight of your dead body would so shock the two contending forces that they would involuntarily draw apart."]
>
> *Wrath* 242

When Thembeka and her son, Zululiyazongoma, drown while trying to ford the flooded Thina River, Zwelinzima is distraught and feels that there is no future left for him. He jumps into the river and drowns, thus ensuring that here are no direct heirs to the amaMpondomise kingship. As much as Zwelinzima's suicide is that of a distraught husband and father, it is also "an attempt to reclaim himself and to cleanse and rid himself of the internal conflicts and identity crisis which he faces on behalf of the 'city" people" (Kaschula, "Iibhari nama-outi" 62).

It is only by recognizing the importance of the ancestors to the community and reading the novel as, at least in part, reflective of a Xhosa world view, that we can interpret Zwelinzima's suicide as something positive and not see his return to claim his heirship as a failed attempt at being a *tussenskapper*. Zwelinzima's death is not only an attempt to cleanse himself, it is also a final effort to heed Jongilanga's words and to do something to appease the wrath of the ancestors who have wreaked havoc on the kingdom. Zwelinzima's suicide is therefore a cleansing sacrifice and once the ancestors have been appeased through the sacrifice, the cleansed community can face a tentative, but hopeful future.[37] As an embodiment of this hope that dawns over kwaMpondomise,

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[37] Zwelinzima's suicide in *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* and Crispin's suicide in Marguerite Poland's *Shades* illustrate the problematic nature of metropolitan critical discourse and underscores Russell Kaschula's call for a new paradigm for reading African literature. We accept Zwelinzima's suicide as a sacrifice because we know and accept that what is at stake in the novel is the tension between a traditional world view and a modern one. The willingness to accept a different world view is less evident when discussing white writing in South Africa. Sandra Chait, for example, argues that white South African writers have used religious mythology as a way of expiating their guilt ("Mythology, Magic Realism, and White Writing"). By transferring the burden of the past onto their respective mythological gods, she claims, violence and hatred become divinely ordained, and no one has to accept culpability for the atrocities of the past. By extension then, Crispin's suicide in *Shades* would represent an inability to cope with white guilt in the absence of gods, for he has rejected a western Christian mythology. But such a reading relies on a western perspective and does not acknowledge the role of ancestors in shaping identity. Read from an African perspective that regards the *iminyanya* as central, Crispin's death becomes an empowering sacrifice, much like that of Zwelinzima in *Ingqumbo yeminyanya*. I have argued in the introduction that Chait's argument, taken to its logical conclusion, leads to a state of paralysis for *all* South African writers. To prove

Cont next page….

Zwelinzima's friend, Mphuthumi, and his wife, Nomvuyo, name their son Zwelithemba, Land of Hope. Zwelithemba's name suggests his role as *umhlanganisi*, one who brings together the opposites: His name is a combination of Zwelinzima (The land that thunders) and Thembeka (Hope, the loved one). The name of the child represents a synthesis that Jordan hopes will be realised in the next generation and the combination of their names.

Jordan's concern with maintaining the importance and centrality of traditional belief systems stands in stark contrast to the way in which white writers like John Buchan sought to erase the African from colonial history or Joubert Reitz's efforts at destabilizing the existing status quo in a manner that would allow Afrikaners to construct a legitimate sense of identity based in the African continent. Jordan was not alone in his fight to salvage what remained of African culture in the face of the inevitable attempts at modernization that marked the entrenchment of a colonial presence in Africa. His contemporary, Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi, was a versatile creative force who dedicated his talents to improving the circumstances of black people in South Africa. Although his family was Christian, Mqhayi grew up in a traditional community where he got to know and respect the ancient amaXhosa customs. In 1891, he went to Lovedale and by the turn of the century he had worked as a teacher, a preacher, and an editor. At the same time, he was busy establishing himself as a writer and an *imbongi*. From the start, he was outspoken and often incurred the wrath of the establishment due to his forthright remarks. His literary oeuvre included *izibongo* (both prepared and

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the point, if we read Zwelinzima's death as a mythologizing moment, then his death, too, represents an inability to cope. Clearly, such a position is untenable, and thus the need for a new critical paradigm for reading African literature.

See also Russell Kaschula, "Exploring the Oral-Written Interface With Particular Reference to Xhosa Oral Poetry," *Research in African Literatures* 28.1 (1997): 173–91. Abiola Irele, *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990); and Abiola Irele, "The African Imagination." *Research in African Literatures* 21.1 (1990): 49–67.

extemporaneous),[38] novels, poetry, journalism, biographies, and autobiography.[39] Although he had produced several poems and journalistic articles as editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu* [The Opinions of the Dark People], his first published prose work was a short novel, *u-Samson* (1907), a "social and political commentary" based on the biblical story of Samson and Delilah (Kuse, "Form and Themes" 14). In this work, as in his early journalism, Kuse writes, Mqhayi suggested that "the political interests of the Xhosa were being betrayed by white Christians and white men of the liberal persuasion in collusion with the white racists." Despite the book's popularity, the Lovedale Press never reprinted the novel.[40]

Mqhayi's second book, *Ityala lamawele* [The Lawsuit of the Twins] (1914), was again a political allegory. Jeff Peires notes that "it is to the credit of whoever was running the Lovedale Press in 1914 that they permitted [certain politically sensitive] remarks to appear in the first edition" ("The Lovedale Press: Literature for the Bantu Revisited" 165), although subsequent editions did not escape the hand of the Lovedale editors. The book is, as Wandile Kuse says, "a compendium of diverse styles" ("Two Aspects of African Literature")—not only in terms of the writing that appears in it, but in terms of its overall construction: the first "section" of the book comprises the title story, "Ityala lamawele," itself a curious mélange of literary devices ranging from the opening dramatic dialogue to prose interspersed with izibongo.

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[38] Russell Kaschula discusses the modern tendency to use both prepared and extemporaneous material for praises in Chapter 2 of *The Bones of the Ancestors are Shaking* (Cape Town: Juta, 2002) and notes this as one of the ways in which the tradition has adapted to the demands of a modern world.

[39] Mqhayi wrote journalistic pieces under several pseudonyms. For a detailed study of aspects his journalistic work under the pseudonym "Nzululwazi," see Ncedile Saule, "A Consideration of S E K Mqhayi's Contributions to *Umteteli Wabantu* Under the Pseudonym 'Nzululwazi'."

[40] Mqhayi's relationship with the Lovedale Press remained tumultuous throughout his life. He regularly clashed with the Director of the Press, R.H.W. Shepherd, who never liked Mqhayi. On occasion, Shepherd wrote to W.G. Bennie that after reading a translation of Mqhayi's autobiography, he "laid it down with a greater liking for the author" (Letter to Bennie, dated 9 May, 1938. File S.E.K. Mqhayi, Cory Library, Grahamstown). See Jeff Peires, "Literature for the Bantu Revisited" for a detailed account of the acrimony between Mqhayi and the Lovedale press and also for an account of several instances of significant editorial interference with regard to the publication of Mqhayi's work, as well as that of other Xhosa writers.

After the title story about the lawsuit has been drawn to a satisfactory close, Mqhayi offers the reader a series of historical and biographical sketches, myths and legends that cover a range of issues concerning the history of the amaXhosa people from ancient times to the present.[41] Although evidently not part of the title story, these chapters continue the consecutive chapter numbering and there is no section break to indicate that these contributions should not be considered part of the story. This arrangement lends a level of ambiguity to the text: while the second "section" stands separate from the title story, the consecutive chapter numbering and the lack of any formal divisions suggest a continuity of purpose, for the essays function as natural extensions of the story. These contributions, too, are comprised of a curious mixture of styles and genres (essays, stories, poems, and izibongo appear side-by side) that continue to explore the main issues of the story in different ways.

"Ityala Lamawele," the title story, hinges on a dispute that arises over the birthright of two twins, Wele and Babini. Albert Gérard suggests that the story has its genesis in the account of the twins of Tamar (Genesis 38: 27–29), although the story of Jacob and Esau is another obvious allusion. In addition to several biblical references, Mqhayi also draws on a wealth of amaXhosa custom and jurisprudence to settle the complicated lawsuit to which the title refers. When a child is born, the last joint of the little finger is severed (*ingqithi*). In the case of twins, this determines which of the two is the firstborn, and therefore regarded as the elder. During their mother's labour, one of the twins of this story, Wele, showed his hand, which was then immediately marked according to custom. Immediately after this had happened, the hand retreated into the womb again and the first child to emerge from the womb was Babini—the child whose finger had not been marked according to custom, and whose name can be rendered as "The Second" or "They-are-Two."[42] According to tradition, the firstborn is the eldest, but because of the complexity of this particular instance, the midwives decided that they could not judge this matter and that time should resolve the problem. When the boys were older, they went hunting for birds. Babini, the firstborn, had come home empty-handed, but his younger brother, Wele, had shot a bird. The other boys suggested that Wele give some of his food to Babini, but Wele replied that he would do so only on the day he could assume the birthright. Babini then took an oath forsaking his birthright, thinking it was no more than a childhood joke, and thus he got his piece of meat.[43] Later, when the twins underwent circumcision, Wele was (accidentally?) circumcised first—an honour customarily reserved for the elder twin.

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[41] In the second edition (1931), Mqhayi included the story of the sinking of the troopship *Mendi*. On February 21, 1917, the liner, S.S. *Darro* collided with the *Mendi*. On board the Mendi were the soldiers of the 5th Battalion, the so-called Native Labour contingent from South Africa. The crew of the *Darro* made no attempt to rescue the soldiers and in total 615 of the 802 men on board the *Mendi* perished. The families of the deceased were never notified and they received no official recognition of their contribution to the war effort. The captain of the *Darro* had his license suspended for a year and the incident was allowed to fade—save for the efforts of people like Mqhayi. It was only in 1986 that a plaque was unveiled in Brighton and at Delville Wood to honour the memory of these soldiers.

When their father, Vuyisile, died and the new head of the household had to be appointed, Babini claimed birthright by virtue of the fact that he was the firstborn. Wele, on the other hand, laid claim to the title by virtue of his severed digit, the barter agreement, and the fact that he had been circumcised first. Also, until now, he had performed that role by providing for the family as befits the eldest child, whereas Babini had led a decadent lifestyle. By the time the case reached the court of King Hintsa, the paramount chief of the amaXhosa, several minor chiefs and councillors had already heard the case, and every one of them had decided in favour of Babini. On the way to hearing Hintsa's verdict in this final arbitration, the men notice that "amanqilo abatshayelela, benqula beyincoma indlela yabo ukuba isikelekile" (17—several Cape longclaws were also cheering them on, and they would respond by giving praises to the ancestors and were excited to see these symbols of a blessed journey).[44] Even before they arrive at King Hintsa's Great Place, the travellers are aware of the fact that Qamata, the Supreme Being, had indeed blessed the travels and the events of the day. It is through such simple devices as bestowing the blessing of the ancestors on the proceedings that Mqhayi is able to offer legitimacy to his own literary endeavour in the eyes of the *amaqaba.*

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[42] The names of the twins, Wele and Babini—rendered into English as "Twin" and "Twin-Twin"—are also the names of the central characters in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*. The overlapping of the names is only one of many ways in which Mda writes back to this particular text.

[43] Here, Mqhayi draws on case of the legendary twins, Nkosiyamuntu and Liwana. In a parallel story, Nkosiyamuntu bartered his birthright for a prime cut of meat (see *Ityala* 29 and also Kuse, "Form and Themes of Mqhayi's Poetry and Prose," Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1978, 234–36).

Once the travellers arrive at the hearing, festivities commence and as a culmination of several days of hearing evidence, Hintsa delivers his verdict:

> "Pula pula ke, nyana kaVuyisile, sekumasuku inkosi zam ezi zemkayo emakaya azo ngenxa yako, kuba weza kuti mawukangeliswe umcimbi onqabileyo, owawungowakwenu oko, nakuba upela namhla sewungowesizwe siphela; kukangelwa wona ke ziqingqita nje ezintsuku zide zibe ngaka.
>
> …
>
> "Ati ke amakowenu ayilenkundla: Hamb' ogoduke uye kukangela kwa elotole ubulikangela kakade, ugcine olosapo lukaVuyisile, uze kuyibika kokwen'apa into engalungileyo oyibonayo."
>
> Upakame u Wele eduma waya kwanga unyawo lwenkosi leyo, wabuya ngokuti vu kwesinye isikundla; kwaye kuxa inkosi yona iguqukela ku Babini yati kuye: "Uveya ke, mfo ka Vuyisile omkulu, uwavile amasuka-ndihlale alenkundla ngenxa yenu, ulivile ilizwi elipatiswe umninawa wako yilenkundla, goduka ke ufike uncedisane naye ngokugcina usapo olo lwakowenu, nempahla, nento yonke, sinibone nikunye nalapa komkulu umtobele, umve."

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[44] The Cape longclaw is a sign of good fortune from the ancestors. See Mtuze, *Essence* 51.

> ["Listen now, you child of Vuyisile [Wele]. It has been several days now that the chiefs have come from their homes because of you, for you came to seek advice in this complicated affair of your home, which now belongs to the nation.
>
> . . .
>
> "Go home now and look after that calf you have been tending all along, and keep that homestead of Vuyisile's as you have done, and report any wrongdoings to me."
>
> Wele rose and hugged the leg of his chief, then he came back and sat in one of the seats; at that point, the chief turned to Babini and said to him: "You eldest son of Vuyisile [Babini], you have heard the various opinions of this court on this matter; you have heard what your brother is instructed to do. Go now and help your younger brother to keep your homestead and your property. And even at this Great Place we should see you together, for you should obey him and listen to him.]

(*Ityala* 31–32)

Hintsa's decision contradicts the norm: he decides to give the lastborn brother precedence and declares him the head of the household and instructs Wele to treat him as such. While the story could have ended with this seemingly equitable verdict, it does not. As Kuse points out ("Form and Theme" 222–23), the story continues to "elaborate as postscripts" some of the issues raised in the story: the twins return home, and the firstborn, Babini, reforms and begins to assume the duties of a firstborn son. His younger twin, Wele, notices the change in his brother and begins to defer to him as his senior. Thus, despite the radical change in tradition embedded in Hintsa's verdict, the rift in the society is healed and the story ends on a note of reconciliation and the triumph of justice.

The allegory of the twins in "Ityala lamawele" is of interest not only as an exposition of the traditional justice system at work, but as statement on the possibilities for shaping a new South African identity, where "the colonists wanted to separate the Xhosas from their customs and traditions" (Satyo, "Between History and Literature" 39).

Through Khulile, one of King Hintsa's councillors, we learn that according to amaXhosa custom, twins have to be treated as one, "kuba angumntu omnye" (24—they are one person).[45] In South Africa, Mqhayi suggests, the relationship between people of European descent and people of African descent is like that between the two twins. As Wandile Kuse points out, "the nuances suggest that the Europeans just might have earned the right to dominance in South Africa. The ancillary would indicate that the Africans subliminally conceded the primacy of European culture and civilization" (224).

Babini's reform after the lawsuit suggests a further parallel: Europeans also have to learn from African custom and tradition and, like Babini, they have to begin to behave in ways that are appropriate to their status.[46] What Mqhayi fearlessly suggests is what Buchan fears most: Europeans need to engage with Africans on equal terms. The twins become allegorical figures who represent the respective claims of whites and blacks to political dominance in the land. In the end, justice is not limited to the legal verdict, but depends on appropriate behaviour on the part of the one who gains the right to succession. As Kuse points out, "[t]he reconciliation of conflicting interests rather than the humiliation of one or the other would be the ideal solution"("Forms and Themes" 225). Through King Hintsa's verdict, Mqhayi therefore calls upon South Africans to find a unity of purpose, to engage in *ukuhlangana*. If white South Africans have indeed gained political supremacy, their right to that position depends entirely on their subsequent behaviour. The problem explored in "Ityala lamawele" is therefore more than a parochial Xhosa concern; its roots are philosophical and linguistic and transcend the limits of any single culture or one region (222). The convoluted nature of the lawsuit turns a simple dispute over birthright into an affair of national interest and importance.

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[45] Sizwe Satyo also points to the "absolute synonymy of the words *wele* and *babini*" ("Between History and Literature" 39).

[46] Mqhayi expands on his vision in his utopian novel, *u-Don Jadu* (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1929), in which people live together happily, incorporating what is best out of African and European traditions into their own.

If Babini's rehabilitation is a postscript to the story proper, then this postscript has its own postscript: once the story of the lawsuit of the twins draws to a close, Mqhayi relates several (oral) historical accounts from the life of the amaXhosa. The "twinning of these different texts," Sizwe Satyo suggests,

> is multi-purpose: it serves as a co-text; it also serves as a context, and finally it could be said that it also serves as a con-text lest it gives offence [J.M. Coetzee, *Giving Offence*] to the missionary editor. ("Between History and Literature" 39).

But *Ityala lamawele* goes further: it also suggests new ways of contextualising (weaving together of different threads in a piece of cloth) political relations in South Africa. If the book appears to fall apart structurally at this point, it serves only to strengthen Mqhayi's contention that the social fabric of the amaXhosa is disintegrating and that everything possible needs to be done to preserve it (*Ityala lamawele*, Introduction). The transition to modernity comes at a price and this apparent disintegration of the text, Mqhayi seems to suggest, is the inevitable outcome of a narrative (and political) structure built entirely on the models of a European tradition. A new, workable social structure will require adaptation and modification of western genres—a bringing together of opposites on a structural level.

Mqhayi's belief that reconciliation is the appropriate course of action to take with regards to resolving the political divisions among the people of South Africa forms a central thread in "Ityala lamawele." Western education—or rather, the application of that education—has gone awry and has defeated the initial purpose for which the missionaries introduced it; instead of strengthening the amaXhosa, it threatens to destroy the traditional social fabric. In this instance, re-contextualization is closely linked to the theme of unity in the novel; if there is unity to be found between the two broader sections of *Ityala lamawele*, it is not to be understood within the confines of the western novel tradition. Both Sizwe Satyo ("Traditional Concepts") and Peter Mtuze ("Siwisa's Short Stories") have argued that Xhosa writers have combined elements of the essay and short story genres, melding them together to turn the Xhosa short story into a uniquely local contribution to world literature. Likewise, structural unity in *Ityala lamawele* arises not from western literary moulds, but from traditional literary forms like *iintsomi* (folktales) and *izibongo* and from the ways in which oral histories are produced.

"Oral history," writes Harold Scheub, "is not the aligning of images in linear modes, but the fragmentation of lineal images and their recasting in new configurations and contexts" ("A Review of African Oral Traditions" 2–3). They are also, he writes elsewhere, "an externalization of the Xhosa worldview" (qtd in Satyo, "Traditional Concepts" 8). The concept of fragmentation of linear modes is not unique to the production of oral history, for thematic parallelism and repetition are also structural elements of *izibongo* (Opland "Structural Patterns"). G.P. Lestrade suggests that the structural patterning of the praise-poem, like that of *iintsomi* and oral histories, does not derive from linear progression, but from the way in which it negotiates and extends central themes and concerns in the narrative:

> The praise-stanza is made up of a succession of [praise-names or phrases/verses], knit together, loosely enough, it is true, but still forming some sort of unit of meaning. The praise-poem, finally, is made up of a succession of praise-stanzas, linked together only in their general application, but not in their specific meaning, and following each other in greatly varying order in different versions of the same praise-poem. It may be noticed, then, that if we take these features in the order praise-name, praise-verse, praise-stanza, and finally praise-poem, each of these is an extension of the preceding feature. ("Bantu Praise-Poems" 3–4)

The collage of styles in the second part of *Ityala lamawele* thus reflects not only an appropriation and internalization of several western narrative modes, but also indicates the centrality of Xhosa traditional narrative modes in Mqhayi's story.

When King Hintsa reappears in the second half of *Ityala lamawele*, he casts off his fictional guise and assumes his rightful position as a great and tragic historical figure. The narrative of his death is a revisionist account that draws on oral eye-witness accounts that contradict the official narrative of his death. At the same time, this narrative becomes an allegory through which Mqhayi can address the central issue of political birthright in the fledgling South African nation. In 1834, the colonial government alleged that one of chief Ngqika's sons had stolen cattle from the colonists. In the ensuing war, King Hintsa tried to remain neutral, but even so, he was arrested by the British and asked to pay an exorbitant amount of cattle as restitution for the alleged loss of colonial cattle. Upon his arrival at the British camp, official reports state, he attacked the soldiers and was shot during the ensuing fight. Mqhayi offers a different account, one that is corroborated by oral tradition and by available facts: Hintsa's good will was repaid by deceit. After taking him captive, the British refused to release him so that he could go and negotiate with his people regarding the payment of restitution. In the end, Hintsa decided to escape so that he could arrange to pay the cattle and thus bring an end to the war. He was recaptured and shot in cold blood, after which his head and ears were severed and taken to British museums. Mqhayi sets the historical record straight and takes the narrative a step further. Rather than presenting Hintsa's death at the hand of the settlers as the beginning of the end of Xhosa independence, Mqhayi suggests that it should be considered a sacrificial offering through which the ancestors could be propitiated and the rifts that had occurred in the society could be healed.[47]

The concept of individual sacrifice such as Hintsa's was not new in Xhosa society. As Hodgson points out, "the higher the value of the sacrificial victim, the greater is the importance of the sacrifice" (*Ntsikana's Great Hymn* 61). She also notes that several Xhosa prophets had called for some form of "national sacrifice" to propitiate the *iminyanya* (Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa* 27). The death of Hintsa, the Xhosa king, is undoubtedly an important sacrifice, but it was followed by another, even more tragic and significant sacrifice. As *Ityala lamawele* segues from the story of the twins into the historical accounts that comprise the latter section of the novel, Mqhayi tells the story of Nompunza, who goes to enquire about the rumours of the resurrection of the dead in kwaXhosa. Although Mqhayi remains vague about the details surrounding these rumours, it is clearly a reference to the prophecies of Nongqawuse, who in 1856–57 called on the amaXhosa to burn their crops and sacrifice all their cattle so that the ancestors could rise and help the amaXhosa against the colonists. The amaXhosa responded to her call and thousands starved to death when the prophecies failed. The oblique reference to the story of Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle Killing turns her story into legend: Nompunza never discovers more about these rumours, but settles down to live among the amaXhosa. What is important is not the verifiable facts of the matter, but what these rumours mean to the amaXhosa. Later, in one of the *izibongo* in *Ityala lamawele*, the *imbongi* prophecies about the coming on Nongqawuse:

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[47] In Marguerite Poland's novel, *Shades*, the death of the missionary's son, Crispin, can also be read as a sacrifice to his people. Poland's deliberate effort to write back to Xhosa literature, history and custom—particularly the *iminyanya* to which the title alludes—makes her work one of the most important to emerge in post-apartheid South Africa. In *Recessional for Grace* (Sandton: Penguin, 2003), Poland continues her efforts to base a new South African identity on traditional concepts by structuring her novel around an investigation into the naming practices among Nguni cattle-owners. This is an extension of her doctoral work on Nguni cattle, published as *The Abundant Herds* (Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, 2003).

> Anivanga na ngentombazana ezakuteta nayo?
> Kutiwa siyakuti yi mbubo kanti lidini.
>
> [Have you not heard of the girl who will prophecy?
> They say we shall interpret the prophecy as death,
> but it is an offering.]
>
> (68)

In the novel, *Idini* (1928), Mqhayi compares "the spilling of the blood for the ancestors" with "the spilling of Christ's blood on Calvary" (20–21, qtd in Qangule 82).[48] The sacrifices of Hintsa and of the amaXhosa people during the Cattle Killing thus also gain the added implication of resurrection contained in Christ's ultimate sacrifice. By turning the death of Hintsa and the consequences of Nongqawuse's prophecies into offerings or sacrifices, he weaves the importance of these acts into the constituting fabric of a modern South African society. In his view, one of the most damaging consequences of modernity was the unravelling of the traditional societal norms, and such selfless acts of personal sacrifice intended for the greater good of the people became an affirmation of a fundamental principle in precolonial African society: *ubuntu*.

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[48] For a discussion of the comparisons between traditional religion and the Bible, see S.Z. Qangule, "A Study of theme and Technique in the Creative Works of S.E.K.L.N. Mqhayi," Ph.D. Diss. Cape Town, 1979," 81–84).

"Ubuntu," writes Ncedile Saule, "is more than just an attribute of individual acts. It is a basic human orientation towards one's fellow men. Put differently, Ubuntu is some kind of humanism—African humanism" ("Images of Ubuntu" 3). Saule argues that for Mqhayi, the loss of *ubuntu* was the greatest tragedy that resulted from colonization. In his autobiography, *uMqhayi wase Ntabozuko* (1938—Mqhayi of Ntabozuko), Mqhayi explains the concept through personal example:

> I am the head of the family, which among the Xhosa, [means] that every orphan child in your [extended] family will be brought to you, to bring up, feed, clothe, and educate without recompense in the future, and sometimes to find that the ones you helped have become your enemies. And so it goes on. One cannot refuse to accept these orphans, for in Xhosa society: to do so would put one without the pale. Even if one is openly your enemy should [he/she] come back to you again in his difficulties, you have to feed and clothe him before he leaves you: [even if he wants to stay, let him do so, and he will leave when he wants to for reasons best known to himself.] (trans. qtd in Patricia Scott, *Mqhayi in Translation* 32–33)

Ubuntu is therefore about helping another person, irrespective of race or creed; about respecting that person's privacy; and about your responsibility as the senior member of a family unit. It is about sharing, for wealth that is parted with will return to you in many different ways. Displaying *ubuntu* as a fundamental philosophy in your life will not only benefit you as a person, but all of your clan/people. It is also a very democratic philosophy: in "Ityala lamawele," all the people in the community have a say at the hearing. Each chapter offers input from several people. In the end, Hintsa makes up his mind from the evidence and the arguments he has heard. It is his decision, but one informed by the views of his people.

Ubuntu is a fluid concept that needs to be adapted to modern times, but nonetheless remains mindful of tradition. Mqhayi was always careful to show that traditional world views are not incompatible with Christianity and that the two can co-exist peacefully. He therefore makes an effort to show that although *ubuntu* is an African cultural construct, it is also something universal that is available to, and can be shared by, people of all races:

> Ngemihla yangaphambili fudula indoda imka nomkayo iye ezinkonzweni emaBhulwini, kuthi emva kweminyaka emininzi ibuye

> seyinosapho oluninzi netshitshitshi lempahla enkhulu nemfutshane ifike imise umzi wayo, yondie usapho lwayo, ingqake izisweli zakowayo. Ngezo mini iBhulu belingayith-andi indoda ekhonza kulo ukuba imke ingazuzanga lukhulu, beliba nehlazo nakwamanye amaBhulu iBhulu elingabatyebisiyo abakhonzi balo.
>
> [In the olden days a man and his wife used to go to the farms [of the Boers] looking for work and after many years would come back driving a number of cattle and sheep. He would then build his home and look after his family. During those days a farmer [Bhulu] was keen that his worker should benefit from him so that he is not regarded as selfish by his fellow farmers.]
>
> (qtd in Saule, "Images of Ubuntu")

According to Mqhayi, *ubuntu* was therefore a universally accepted concept during the early colonial period, but in modern times, colonists have consciously disregarded *ubuntu* by paying black factory workers less, etc. The sense of ubuntu that drove people of all races in the past has been replaced by a racially-based self-interest. In *Ityala lamawele*, *ubuntu* is what the twins need to regain in their lives. It is only once Wele and Babini realize their responsibility to each other and to their society (when they manage to transcend mere self-interest), that the rift in the society can begin to heal.

Chapter 7

Rattle and …Uhm: Interpreting the Voices of Our Ancestors, 1910–1960[1]

The names of the ancestral bones that rattle inside the cupboards of South African literature are as varied as those that belong to the people who inhabit the space outside these cupboards: Nongqawuse, Coenraad de Buys, Gquma…. These people are our ancestors, *iminyanya*. Their lives were diverse, yet as ancestors their paths continue to cross wherever their names appear among the stones that comprise our literary *izivivane*. Each one of these figures has, to a greater or lesser extent, shaped literary constructions of modern South African belonging in unique ways.

As Chris Mann notes, the *iminyanya*, these people from the past have the ability to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers in ways that we, the living, do not always understand ("Towards a Perception of the Shades" 33). The more we allow the *iminyanya*, with their different linguistic or cultural groups, to remain unknown to each other, the more we, the living, will also remain strangers to each other. It is therefore only by allowing our *iminyanya* to speak to each other and to get to know each other that we can really begin to reveal different and immensely complex facets of our lives to each other, and that we can begin to become aware of our interconnectedness, our "folded-in-ness," as human beings (Sanders, *Complicities* 9).

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[1] A revised version of sections of this chapter has been accepted for publication in Nicholas M. Creary and Marlene G. De La Cruz-Guzmán, ed., *Centennial Reflections on the Lives and Work of A.C. Jordan and B.W. Vilakazi* (Johannesburg: Wits UP, Forthcoming 2006).

Wherever South African writers have made historical figures a part of their fictional narratives, they have created "a confluence (or divergence) of time, space, knowledge, prediction and imagination" (Carklin, "Dramatic Excavations" 30). For Example, Mary Waters treats Nongqawuse differently from the way in which Herbert Dhlomo or Benedict Vilakazi do. Yet it is at the point of confluence surrounding literary accounts of the events that shaped Nongqawuse's life, or those of Coenraad de Buys or Gquma, that we can begin to understand how the people of South Africa interact and imagine themselves. To talk about these literary and historical shades in anything but a comparative framework is to deny ourselves the opportunity to stop being strangers to each other and to begin to discover not *whether* we belong, but *how* we belong. What emerges from such a comparative discussion of our literary ancestors is a greater understanding of the contributions of the *iminyanya* to our sense of belonging by reading through the various "interactions, collusions and antagonisms" (Brown, "National Identity" 768) of their respective historical moments. By investigating our ancestors as part of a shared problematic, as I do in this chapter, we can become aware of our interconnectedness and transcend the rigidity of the feeling of parallel co-existence that was forced on us by apartheid.

Michael Chapman reminds us that "the Xhosa bard and the settler journalist, though divided by language, literacy, race and probably sentiment, were both part of the same story—a story which remains open of course, to different interpretations" (*Southern African Literatures* xii). Reading the stories of Nongqawuse, Coenraad de Buys and Gquma as part of a common ancestral heritage is only one of many possible interpretations, but it is an interpretation that allows us to see how writers in the Union of South Africa also read and interpreted our shared past; it is a story of mutual implication in the construction of the difference that became the defining characteristic of our society in the twentieth century. Yet, by pausing at these literary *izivivane* comprised of books about our ancestors and reading them as part of a shared problematic, we may be able to transcend our perceived differences and simply belong; we may reach a point where the differing versions of the past reveal not our difference, but our shared sense of being South African.

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One day during April 1856, two young amaXhosa girls, Nongqawuse and Nombanda, were scaring the birds away from the crops when Nongqawuse heard strangers calling her name. These strangers told her to return to her community and tell the people to slaughter all their cattle and to refrain from cultivating their crops. Once this was done, the dead would arise and help them in their struggle against the white colonizers (Peires, *The Dead Will Arise* 79).[2] Initially the girls thought it was a joke, but when the strangers appeared again, they related the events to Nongqawuse's uncle, Mhlakaza. From the description Nongqawuse gave of the strangers, Mhlakaza realised that one of them was in fact her deceased father. He accompanied the girls to the fields, where the strangers again spoke in voices that only Nongqawuse could hear, and repeated the story. Convinced that these were indeed the ancestors speaking through Nongqawuse, Mhlakaza spread the instructions among the amaXhosa chiefs. In the months that followed, many amaXhosa killed their cattle and destroyed their crops. Then they waited in vain for the prophecy to be fulfilled. The wholesale slaughter of animals, coupled with the widespread outbreak of cattle lungsickness and a severe drought, led to mass starvation.

Many amaXhosa did not believe the prophecies, and an acrimonious rift arose between those who believed (the *amathamba*, or Submissive Ones) and those who did not—the *amagogotya* (the Unyielding Ones, or Unbelievers). Often, but not always, this split coincided with the division between the *amagqoboka* and those who continued adhering to traditional ways—the *amaqaba*. The colonial government, under the governorship of Sir George Grey, fuelled the disaster by his general tardiness to accept refugees and allow humanitarian relief to reach the starving amaXhosa, and by co-opting groups of *amagogotya* into waging war against their fellow countrymen. After several months, Grey sent in the colonial troops and claimed the territory in the name of the crown. Broken and dispirited, the amaXhosa could not resist the might of the British. It is easy, with hindsight and from within a western frame of reference, to dismiss Nongqawuse's prophesies out of hand. However, such a dismissal fails to recognize the complexity of the cultural forces that drove her and those of her people who interpreted her prophecies. For one, the amaXhosa did not have a fixed sense of a Supreme Being in the Christian sense, and their religious activity was focused on the *iminyanya*, the ancestral spirits that moved freely around the homestead even though they were also thought to inhabit a separate spirit world.[3] The *iminyanya* visited people in dreams and in visions, and it was the duty of the prophets to interpret these visions. If a person experienced illness or some other misfortune, this generally indicated that the *iminyanya* were dissatisfied and that some form of propitiation was required—usually in the form of sacrificing one or more head of cattle, depending on the severity of the situation.

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[2] The information in these paragraphs is collated mostly from Jeff Peires's extensive study of Nongqawuse and the Cattle Killing, *The Dead will Arise* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989) and from Noël Mostert's *Frontier: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

When the missionaries arrived at the turn of the nineteenth century, they almost immediately set about creating written material for the amaXhosa in their own language.[4] Much of the early literature in isiXhosa was concerned with interpreting the biblical message in the language and idiom of the amaXhosa, and it was therefore a logical impulse for Xhosa writers themselves to include an interpretative dimension to their own work when they started writing. While writers did not immediately take up the role, function and position of the prophet in a traditional society (nor did they claim any intention to do so), the interpretative dimension of their work did overlap to some extent with the interpretative aspect of a traditional diviner's work in that both writers and diviners used dreams and visions to interpret current happenings for the people. The Cattle Killing, which had been prompted by a series of visions and their interpretations, stood out as a singularly important event in the contemporary history of the amaXhosa, and soon "became part of the Xhosa repertoire of idioms," both oral and literary (Kuse, "Form and Themes" 11). In a certain sense, therefore, the birth of a written culture in Xhosa threatened the traditional cosmology of the amaXhosa as much as did the increasing presence of Christian missions in emaXhoseni and the frequent wars (whether among rival clans or with the Settlers). Together, these factors severely disrupted the sense of belonging among the amaXhosa.[5]

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[3] Most commonly situated in the water, hence a common euphemism for them: a*bantu bamlambo* (The People of the River).

[4] The first Xhosa reading sheet—50 copies of the alphabet—was printed on 19 December 1823, three days after the arrival of the press at the Chumie mission station in 1823 (Shepherd, *Literature for the Bantu* 2).

The magnitude of the disruption in the mid-nineteenth century clearly indicated that something serious was amiss, and certain amaXhosa prophets had previously called for some form of "national sacrifice" to propitiate the *iminyanya* (Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa* 27). Within the severely disrupted socio-cultural environment of the amaXhosa, Nongqawuse's call for a mass sacrifice was therefore not unusual, although its scope far exceeded anything that had been suggested before. Yet the catastrophe of Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle Killing was not a plot conceived by either the British or the amaXhosa. It was, as Jeff Peires remarks, a "logical and rational response…by a nation driven to desperation by pressures that people today can barely imagine" (*The Dead will Arise* xi). While the events of 1856–1857 did not mark the end of military resistance to the British, they did signify a shift in the balance of power that culminated in the eventual subjugation of the amaXhosa in 1878. Several political groups subsequently emerged to defend African interests, but it was only in the aftermath of the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 that African political leaders consolidated their efforts in an attempt to address concerns over the implementation of the Natives' Land Act of 1913.[6] In what can only be construed as a gross miscarriage of justice, the government had legislated that Africans were not allowed to own land in the Union, and had set aside territory for them in the reserves. As Sol Plaatje, a founder member of the SANNC and its first Secretary-General, observed, "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (*Native Life* 21). As in the time of Nongqawuse, Africans entered the twentieth century in a state of extreme turmoil that threatened their already compromised position in their own country, and this sense of turmoil found expression in the nascent literary and urban African cultures.

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[5] I am aware of the close interrelationship that exists between these three factors: the arrival of the written word accompanied the missionaries; they in turn often formed the vanguard of a greater settler population. The settlers drove the amaXhosa east into territory that was already occupied, thus fuelling wars over possession and occupation of the land.

The repercussions of the Natives' Land Act reverberated throughout the Union as Africans were forced to confront a new reality in which their ability to possess land and to move about freely was severely compromised. For those Africans who still had voting rights in the Cape Province, life was more difficult. Without access to land, it became increasingly problematic to meet the eligibility requirements for voting. For many Africans, particularly the educated elite from the Cape Province, the concern was not so much to gain equal rights for all Africans in the Union as it was a desperate struggle to retain the limited political rights they enjoyed under the old Cape constitution—many of which had been transferred to the Union constitution. However, urban African leaders, especially those in the Transvaal who advocated on behalf of the exploited mineworkers, were not concerned with protecting a limited franchise they did not share. Their thinking was influenced by the radical labour policies of the International Commercial Workers' Union and the Communist Party and by Africanist philosophies such as those advocated by Marcus Garvey. In his later years Garvey, the

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[6] The South African Native National Congress (renamed the African National Congress in 1921) was formed in 1912.

Jamaican-born founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, became an ardent African nationalist who strove to end European domination in Africa. Garvey's promotion of African pride and independence resonated with African leaders like the ANC's Josiah Gumede, who interpreted his philosophy in the popular phrase "Africa for the Africans."

A conservative victory within the ANC at the end of the 1920s ended a decade of increasing radicalism in the organisation, and independent African resistance became virtually moribund during the first half of the 1930s as many African leaders joined forces with white liberals in Joint Councils that were affiliated to the Johannesburg-based Institute of Race Relations. Not all Africans were enamoured by this trend: after the 1935 ANC conference in Bloemfontein, a new organisation, the All-African Convention (AAC), was formed to unite African opposition to the government. Their most immediate concern was opposition to the Hertzog Bills, which proposed to remove Africans from the common voters' roll. Although the AAC failed to stop the Bills from passing, and never gained widespread support before its demise in 1937, it did revive the spirit of resistance in the ANC.[7]

Among those who attended the Convention in 1935 was Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo, a young journalist and writer who would later be instrumental in the formation of the ANC Youth League, and who would for a short time head the League in Natal.[8] Dhlomo had been a major contributor to T.D. Mweli Skota's *The African Yearly Register: Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary (Who's Who) of Black Folks in Africa* that appeared in 1931. The publication, which attempted to foster an awareness and pride among Africans of their own past, reflected the lingering Garveyist influence on African political thought.

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[7] See Couzens, *The New African* 140–43.

[8] Couzens, *The New African* 254–63.

Dhlomo and other young writers tried to convey their nationalist pride, as well as their increasing sense of frustration at the political developments in the country, through their writing. Dhlomo's first plays, *Ntsikana* and *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator*,[9] attempted to relate the heroic events of the African past to the present-day situation. Although *Ntsikana* was possibly the first play Dhlomo wrote, Dhlomo's subsequent reputation was built largely on *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, the only one of his plays to be published in his lifetime.[10]

Dhlomo was part of a new generation of African intelligentsia who grew up in an urbanised, and often Christian, environment. The product of a mission school, he had been exposed to European literary classics and formed part of an educated African elite.[11] Being part of this elite also put him at the forefront of redefining who Africans were, and what their relationship to the social and political environment would be.

Martin Orkin has described Dhlomo's plays as "the first significant attempt in drama to challenge the dominance of the imperial and colonialist centre as well as to contest aspects of the prevailing ruling class discourse emanating from the white settler culture" (*Drama and the SA State* 22). While Orkin—correctly, in my view—sees *The Girl Who Killed to Save* as part of an already established tradition of resistance, a more common view of the play is to see it as part of a tradition of "mission literature."[12]

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[9] The spelling "Nongqause" reflects the spelling used in the "old" Xhosa orthography. Although I have used the modern spelling, "Nongqawuse," in my discussion, I have retained the original spelling when quoting from or referring to the texts.

[10] It is uncertain which of these two plays Dhlomo wrote first. In *The New African*, Tim Couzens places *Ntsikana* first in his discussion; however, in *H.I.E. Dhlomo: Collected Works* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985), he and Nick Visser have placed it after *The Girl Who Killed to Save*.

[11] One should not over-emphasise this point, as the exposure to European literature was all too often, as David Attwell notes in "Modernizing Tradition," the "garden variety" of Romanticism (96).

[12] See, inter alia, Malvern van Wyk Smith in *Grounds of Contest* (Cape Town: Jutalit, 1990) and also, to a certain extent, Tim Couzens in *The New African*.

Central to the latter reading of the play is Dhlomo's apparent treatment and interpretation of the Great Cattle Killing as an event that gains its significance from the fact that it forced African people into modernity and into an acceptance of Christianity.[13] Proponents of the Dhlomo-as-mission-literature school argue that while *The Girl Who Killed to Save* shows glimpses of an emergent African political consciousness, it is, for the most part, overshadowed by the strong advocacy of a missionary world view, and it becomes no more than an early draft or prototype for later, more political works by other writers, such as Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy* (1946). Neil Butcher captures the essence of the "mission literature" approach in the conclusion to his study of *The Girl Who Killed to Save*: Dhlomo's plays, he states, reveal a level of ambivalence that makes it difficult to establish whether "the playwright either challenges or reproduces the dominant ideological formations of his time" ("Herbert Dhlomo in Perspective" 60). Butcher presents *The Girl Who Killed to Save* as an attempt at "assimilation," a process which, Minneke Schipper argues, denotes a stage where "the colonizer is imitated as far as possible in his language, his customs and his mentality" (*Theatre and Society* 18). However, placing *The Girl Who Killed to Save* in the mould of "missionary literature" absolves the reader from interrogating the many complex ways in which Dhlomo negotiates modernity and in which he advocates political resistance in the face of severe censorship.

The bulk of the dialogue in the play belongs either to the missionary, Charles Brownlee, or to his brother-in-law, Hugh. It is Hugh who ultimately articulates the theory that forms the heart of Butcher's reading of the play:

> New ideas, opinions and institutions can be built only on the ruins of the old...if old ideas, customs and sanctions are to be destroyed, and the site prepared for new intellectual and moral structures, there must first be a process, not of construction, but of destruction...this great cattle killing drama which we witness today will prepare the Xhosa

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[13] Tim Couzens notes that this attitude was "fairly typical of 'progressive' thinking of the time and was an opinion shared by several of [Dhlomo's] acquaintances" (*The New African* 71).

> national soil—soul—for the early propagation of the message of the missionary, the blessings of medical science, the law and order of the administrator, and the light of education. (18)

But conflating Hugh's statement with Dhlomo's own position fails to acknowledge the ambiguity and complexity of his writing. In fact, Dhlomo argued that African drama was of national importance and that "[t]he development of African drama cannot purely be from African roots. It must be grafted in Western drama" (Drama and the African" 7). Preparing the African for a life in a modern world did not imply the "destruction" of "old ideas, customs and sanctions" as Hugh suggests, but rather involved finding ways in which to modernize and re-evaluate existing traditions. Hugh's general remark about having to destroy the old before building the new resonates with similar calls made at the time by both N.P. van Wyk Louw and Roy Campbell, and does not necessarily reflect Dhlomo's viewpoint.[14] However, Butcher and other proponents of the Dhlomo-as-mission-literature position appear to take Hugh's statement as a reflection of Dhlomo's own views, and so Nongqawuse's value lies primarily in the way in which her actions allowed Africans to see the light of western civilization. This reading is usually illustrated with reference to the last scene of the play, in which a convert, Xaba, lies dying. As Xaba passes into the world of the ancestors, he describes his vision to his wife, MaXaba:

> **Xaba**: Look, MaXaba, Look! Listen! See the beautiful crowd singing? Ah! This is the host of those who perished in the Great Famine. Do you see these people, surrounding, thanking, and laughing with Nongqause. They tell her that hunger and destitution drove them into the paths of life, led them to the missionary and his divine message; put them into the hands of God. So there is triumph in death; there is finding in death; there is beauty in death.... They call her their Liberator from Superstition and from the rule of Ignorance.... O Nongqause, the Liberator! (40–41)

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[14] See Roy Campbell, "Marginalia," *Voorslag* 1.1(1926): 62, and also N.P. van Wyk Louw in "Rigting," *Versamelde prosa* 5–11.

Having spoken, Xaba dies and the curtain falls for the end of the play as the missionary begins to play soft music on his portable organ.

Xaba's suggestion that conversion offers hope was not new. In his Great Hymn, "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," Ntsikana had fused a traditional world view with a Christian one and had suggested to his followers that Christianity offered something new and valuable. In *uHambo lukaGqobhoka*, H.N. Ndawo had suggested that among the *amaqaba*, death was something to be feared (4). To Ndawo, the value of Christianity lay in its ability to take away that fear and offer hope in its stead. Yet neither Ntsikana nor Ndawo had suggested that converts should forget their traditions. Dhlomo's play follows in this tradition by emphasising the importance of tradition rather than its obsolescence.

The original publication of *The Girl Who Killed to Save* ([1935]) contains five songs Dhlomo had written to be sung during the performance of the play.[15] The song designated for the closing scene is "Nkosi kawu sikelele":

> Nkosi kawu sikelele
> Imfundiso ze zweletu
> Uze usivuselele
> Siputume ukulunga.
>
> [God bless the teachings
> Of our land
> Help us revive
> The greatness that was in us.]

(*The Girl Who Killed to Save* 43)

An initial reading of the song confirms Dhlomo's deep-rooted faith and lends credence to the arguments in favour of *The Girl Who Killed to Save* as a "mission" play. A second reading reveals several ambiguities in the text of the song that allow a politicized reading of the final scene in the play: Loren Kruger points out in *The Drama of South Africa: Plays, Pageants and Publics since 1910–56* that the title and opening line call to mind the opening lines of what was then the ANC anthem and is currently the South African National Anthem, "Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika" (God Bless Africa). In addition to this allusion, there is also the fact that the verb, *usivuselele*, generally translated as "help us revive" can also legitimately be rendered as "stir us into action." The ambiguity of Dhlomo's phrasing suggests a desire to return to the greatness—both as individuals and as a people—that had been destroyed by the advent of the colonial era. The hymn celebrates Christ while at the same time it alludes to the strength embedded in African political unity, thus providing the reader with a framework within which to reread Nongqawuse's vision. Seeing the final speech primarily as advocating the acceptance of Christianity and western tradition is to deny Nongqawuse's centrality as a political icon through which African nationalism can be reborn.

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[15] These songs have not been reproduced in Visser and Couzens's *H.I.E. Dhlomo: Collected Works* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985).

Nongqawuse's importance as an icon rather than as a real, flesh-and-blood character is marked by the fact that in a play that bears her name, she is on stage only during the first scene. Her relative absence from the play allows Dhlomo to focus on her symbolic importance to the modern African struggle rather than on her personal development through the crisis that confronts the amaXhosa people.[16] Nevertheless, the

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[16] While the symbolic importance of Nongqawuse as a national symbol of unity and resistance remains unquestioned, Brett Bailey, in his 2000 reworking of the Nongqawuse story, "The Prophet—The Play," gives us a greater glimpse of Nongqawuse's inner struggle (*The Plays of Miracle and Wonder: Bewitching Visions and Primal High-Jinx From the South African Stage* [Cape Town: Double Storey, 2003] 167–93). The shift from her symbolic value to her struggle to find her identity is significant, as Bailey sees in her story the possibility of constructing a new sense of belonging in South Africa that is accessible to all the people of the country. This extension of Nongqawuse's importance and of the concept of what constitutes a "nation" lies at the heart of a new South African sense of belonging.

Chris Mann's reworking of the play, *The Killing of the Cattle* (1985, ms 200.96.4, Chris Mann Collection, National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown), offers a contemporary liberal reworking of the material. Mann focuses on the mediation work done by the Rev. Brownlee and by Hugh. The emphasis on negotiation again opens up the possibility of reinterpreting the events in a way that reveals up the potential for a re-imagining of a sense of belonging. Written before the demise of the apartheid regime, Mann's play is a product of its time: in retrospect, the call for an end to the violence, for

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few glimpses we do get of her show a young woman racked with doubt and confusion as she tries to makes sense of her visions. In the first scene, Nongqawuse acts out her vision in front of her uncle, Mhlakaza, and the king, Kreli.[17] She ends her re-enactment with the words "The amaXhosa will win! Great tidings! Victory! Victory! Victory!" In the play, Nongqawuse never specifically states that the ancestors want the cattle to be killed; yet this is how Mhlakaza and Sarhili interpret her vision (8).[18] A short while later, Nongqawuse remarks to a friend:

> "I did hear strange sounds—not voices—near the river. Father and the Elephant [Sarhili] assured me…the sounds were the voices of our ancestors. But are their interpretations correct?" (10)

Nongqawuse does not doubt her vision, but the interpretation of that vision, a revelation that raises the question of how to interpret the play as a whole. By inserting a song that alludes to the need for political unity among Africans, Dhlomo asks us not to doubt Nongqawuse's vision, but Xaba's interpretation of her vision.

Suggesting that Dhlomo wanted his readers to re-examine the purpose of the final scene to uncover the veiled political message is not mere conjecture. He published his play with the Lovedale Press, which, under the editorship of R.H.W. Shepherd, had a history of editorial interference.[19] In 1936, Shepherd returned the manuscripts of two of

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a negotiated settlement and for a rethinking of a sense of belonging all seem prophetic. Bailey's later reworking of the myth is a logical culmination of the possibilities Mann has begun to explore.

[17] "Kreli" is the corrupted English rendition for the name of the Xhosa king, Sarhili.

[18] Many commentators, including van Wyk Smith, comment on Dhlomo's "Victorian" language. While the dated Victorian idiom certainly pervades Dhlomo's work, it could be argued (particularly in the context of prophecies and visions in *The Girl Who Killed to Save*), that the stylized language is reflective of the archaic idiom and language used by the *imbongi* during praising. If this is indeed the case, then Dhlomo's use of language becomes a deliberate choice and presents his position as a dramatist as analogous to that of the *imbongi*.

[19] See Jeff Peires, "Literature for the Bantu Revisited" for a detailed analysis of several instances of editorial interference.

Dhlomo's submissions—a short story, "An Experiment in Colour," and the play, "Cetshwayo."[20] Shepherd rejected the use of literature for political aims, and maintained that successful African writers had to turn away from "propaganda" and "get away from race problem poetry and to be simply poets" (*Literature for the South African Bantu: a Comparative Study of Negro Achievement* 21). In the light of the growing sense of political unity among Africans during the 1930s, Shepherd wrote that, to him, the most appealing aspect of American Negro literary achievement had been the fact that they had got away from writing literature that was "purely utilitarian or propagandist" to writing literature that was dominated by thoughts of art for art's sake. Of local writing he later predicted that

> …Bantu writers who have escaped from a purely utilitarian or propagandist view of literature and whose souls are dominated by ideas of art for art's sake, will arise and make known the soul of Africa. (*Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu* 89)

In addition to striving to produce "art for art's sake" at his press, Shepherd also advocated literature with greater religious content.[21] In order to get published through Lovedale, Dhlomo therefore had to be careful to present his play in a way that suggested neither propaganda nor an apparent lack of religious fervour and, seen within this context, the final scene of the play becomes a delicate balancing act in which Dhlomo attempts to reach out politically to fellow Africans while ensuring that he does not overstep the boundaries of missionary acceptability. This is an unenviable position for any writer to be in, and it makes the question of interpretation crucial.

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[20] In my M.A. thesis, I argue that this was done largely for political reasons. Chapter 4 focuses specifically on R.H.W. Shepherd and his views on publishing, while chapter 7 discusses the ways in which Dhlomo attempted to bypass Shepherd's strict censorship.

[21] Although Shepherd felt that drama was not the ideal genre for African writers to explore, he had a predilection for African poetry and for dramas based on religious events:

> Our Bantu people have distinct histrionic gifts, and the Bible message might come to larger numbers if they themselves acted or saw others act some of the Bible stories. (qtd in Oosthuizen, *Shepherd of Lovedale* [Johannesburg: Hugh Keartland, 1970] 149)

In *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu: A Brief History and a Forecast* (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1945) Shepherd bemoans the fact that religious expression in the form of "original worship literature" was not forthcoming from African pens, for only if it did, could "the heritage of the Universal Church...be enriched by a tribute from Africa" (99).

What the audience sees in the final scene is a communication with the spirit of Nongqawuse, that is, with the Nongqawuse who has joined the ranks of the *iminyanya*. In the vision, she is presented as a woman who has lost her sense of belonging, and who in her moment of uncertainty turns to a new form of religious expression—Christianity—in an effort to make sense of her changing world. This culminating scene of the play therefore presents us with both a visitation from the *iminyanya* and a call to embrace Christianity. The almost imperceptible ease with which this confluence of the apparent opposites takes place illustrates the way in which Dhlomo engages in *ukuhlangana*, the act of joining opposites. As both ancestor and harbinger of a new dispensation in the scene, Nongqawuse affirms the peaceful co-existence of Christianity and traditional belief systems in the community. As much as Nongqawuse's injunction to the living is to embrace Christianity, Dhlomo wants to remind his audience that what we are experiencing on stage is a visitation from the *iminyanya*: their presence in our world is indelible. While Nongqawuse's message suggests that modern Africans should embrace Christianity, her presence onstage is as an embodiment of an ancestor and thus becomes a stark reminder to the audience not to forget the *iminyanya* lest they incur their wrath. In the final scene, Nongqawuse is a mediator, a go-between between world. She is at once a *tussenskapper* and *umhlanganisi*; but she is also more: Her presence on stage is also a warning, and in this sense, she performs the role of *isihlanganiso*, an instrument to ward off danger.

Just as with the song that is sung during this final scene of the play, Nongqawuse's words in the scene should not be taken at face value, but need to be read in conjunction with her earlier remarks when she appears on the stage in person: In the closing moments of the first scene, Nongqawuse's lover, Mazwi (who is *igogotya*[22]) begs her to flee from emaXhoseni and thus escape certain death, either by starvation, or at the hands of a dissatisfied, starving populace that no longer believes her prophecies. Nongqawuse replies, "I cannot. I dare not—will not…The People! The Truth!" (12) By choosing not to forsake her dying people, Dhlomo's Nongqawuse presents herself as a sacrifice.

The "victory" referred to in Nongqawuse's prophecy does not lie in the rejection of ancient customs, but in affirming them: she becomes part of the national sacrifice she had called for.[23] Although she chooses to adhere to traditional custom, she also reaffirms Ntsikana's injunction to his followers on his deathbed, that they should remain "*njenge mbumba yamanyama*" (Hodgson "Genius" 35). It is only by sticking together in an unbreakable mass that Ntsikana's small group of converts could survive in their world. Like Ntsikana's few faithful followers, modern Africans also have to stick together. The value of Nongqawuse's vision therefore lies not only in the call to conversion, but also in the call for sacrifice and for political unity.[24]

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[22] Singular of *amagogotya*, Unbeliever.

[23] Dhlomo is twisting historical fact here: the historical Nongqawuse was taken to safety and was living among the amaBomvana when the Colonial troops asked that she be extradited. She was taken to live with Major Gawler and was subsequently sent to Cape Town, where she was incarcerated on Robben Island for her own protection.

[24] Sacrifice in the sense employed by Dhlomo's Nongqawuse is a trope that surfaces in several contemporary South African texts. Marguerite Poland's *Shades* contains a similar enactment of personal sacrifice: Crispin, the son of a missionary, convinces three young men from his father's mission to go and work in the mines. At the outbreak of the South African War, all African mine workers are sent home, and the three young men are killed during a raid on their train. Crispin's subsequent suicide, much like that of Zwelinzima in A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1940) becomes an act of liberation: it is only through sacrificing his own life that Benedict is able to find the courage to leave the mission and embark on a journey of self-discovery—of re-establishing his sense of belonging. (See also p. 207, n37 and p.217, n.47 for related discussions of *Shades*.)

The notion of sacrifice is taken up on a more metaphorical level in Etienne van

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The importance of respecting and re-interpreting ancestral tradition is particularly evident in the lighter moments that are interspersed throughout the play. Although Dhlomo, as a Christian, rejects the practise of paying *lobola*, or a bride price, he recognizes its centrality in traditional custom. He does, however, show how Nongqawuse's prophecy has rendered some traditions meaningless. It is not the fact that the Selanto family in the play refuses to pay *lobola* for his daughter that disturbs the old man who complains to Nongqawuse, but the fact that because of the prophecy, cattle have become worthless, so now the Selantos want to make use of the good exchange rate to *lobola* a second daughter. Dhlomo's implication is not that the tradition ought to be scrapped, but that it should be modified to suit the needs of the new order.

Not all tradition is rendered meaningless by Nongqawuse's prophecy. In another scene, a messenger arrives at the missionary's home to inform him that king Sarhili refuses to accept the missionary interventions and is slaughtering his cattle. As the messenger, Lizwe, is dismissed, Nomaliso, one of the house servants, rushes in:

> **Nomaliso:** (*Rushing in wild, and shouting*) Snake! A snake. There is a snake there (*pointing from where she comes*).
> **Mrs. Brownlee:** (*Coming in on hearing the noise*) What is it Charles? What is it, Nomaliso?
> **Brownlee**: (*Embracing her*) Nothing, my dear. A snake only. (*To*

Heerden's *Toorberg*. Druppeltjie du Pisani (Droplet du Pisani), the last direct heir of the Moolman clan, lies trapped in a borehole. After three days, Abel Moolman, his grandfather, shoots him. The novel centres on the subsequent inquest. At the end of the narrative, Abel's suicide in the attic of the farmhouse (which represents the collective subconscious of the Afrikaner) becomes a sacrifice that allows future generations the freedom to escape from the drought that has engulfed them. In *Die Swye van Mario Salviati* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 2000; trans. *The Long Silence of Mario Salviati* [New York: ReganBooks, 2003]), it is an act of sacrifice in which Karel Skoonveld (Karl Thin Air in the English translation) drives the wagon with Kruger's gold into a cave and remains there for generations. He becomes a different kind of sacrifice: although he is initially driven by a desire to own the gold and to take his wealth for himself, his decision to remove the curse from society becomes a sacrifice that in the end draws Ingi Friedlander into the quest to find the bones and, in that way, her own interconnectedness with this community. The sacrifice becomes a way in which the community can re-invent itself and lay to rest the aching bones of the past.

> *Lizwe*.) Lizwe, go and kill the snake for her.
> **Nomaliso**: Go in first, and kill it. (*Pushing out Lizwe, and following fearfully behind him*)
> **Mrs Brownlee**: How Nomaliso fears snakes! She says she was "charmed" to fear them. (*Exit*) (*The others laugh*)
>
> (21)

Mrs Brownlee interprets Nomaliso's "wild" entrance as fear and superstition. While snakes certainly can invoke fear, and they are "something you must distance yourself away from" (Mzi Mahola, "Interview"), there are notable exceptions. The brown mole snake, *nkwakhwa*, for instance, is regarded as an embodiment of the ancestral spirits, and it serves as a totem for the amaJola clan. Majola (literally: "Mother of Jola") appears to selected individuals in times of trouble or need as an emissary from the ancestors. Harming Majola will cause some form of ill fortune to befall the perpetrator of this deed (Mahola "Interview"), as Thembeka in *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* discovers. When you encounter Majola, it is your duty to share the blessings of this occasion with others; failure to do so will invoke the wrath of the ancestors.[25]

Announcing the presence of an ancestral spirit to a roomful of missionaries is certainly sufficient cause to instil fear in even the bravest soul, yet this may be precisely what Nomaliso attempts to do. However, Nomaliso's reluctance to re-enter the room with the snake and to kill it may not be a sign of either fear or superstition, but a reluctance to incur the wrath of the ancestors by harming Majola.

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[25] In *The Heart of Redness*, Camagu sees Majola in his hotel room. As an unbeliever in traditional practises, he is surprised by this occurrence. Nonetheless, he says to the chambermaid that this is Majola and subsequently decides to stay on in Qholorha to rediscover his roots. Majola's appearance marks a turning point in Camagu's life and prepares us for the way in which he lives up to his name. When they are called to their profession, traditional diviners undergo *ukuthwasa*, a trance-like state characterized by convulsions. Depending on the form of the *ukuthwasa* experience, some diviners are assigned specialized functions. The instruction "Camagu!" [Go, and be pacified!" / "Peace be with you!"] is given to someone whose special gift is a propitiating the ancestral spirits. After seeing the Majola, Camagu decides to remain in the town of Qholorha, thus sacrificing the future that awaits him in the USA in favour of re-establishing himself in the traditional community. In this way, he offers himself as a sacrifice to the new South Africa.

Majola often appears at the *ikhundla*, the traditional homestead. This is the place where matters of importance to the family unit are discussed and where decisions affecting the people are made. By having the Majola appear on a stage in the city, Dhlomo implies that the old traditions have not disappeared, but that the site for making important decisions has moved from the *ikhundla* to the modern stage. For Dhlomo, who vociferously advocated the revolutionary potential of drama, there could be no more important place to act out African modernity, and the centrality of the ancestors within this sense of modernity, than on the stage.[26]

The Girl Who Killed to Save was written around 1933, a time of intense turmoil and suffering for Africans. Now, as in the time of Nongqawuse, Dhlomo appears to be suggesting, a sacrifice is necessary to appease the angered ancestral spirits. Through Nongqawuse's sacrifice, and the sacrifices of those who come after her, the spirits will be appeased and order restored in society. Nomaliso's encounter with the Majola may be read not as a sign of fear or of superstition, but as a renewed recognition of the fact that the spirits of the ancestors are still among us. It is not that the old order has to be destroyed, and that a new order has to be built from scratch; rather, the new order has to take as its foundation the sacrifices of the ancestors and build on that. The story of Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle Killing becomes a symbol, not of the death of a nation or the passing of its traditions, but of unified African resistance, irrespective of the consequences.

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[26] Brett Bailey's mythical reworking of events in *The Prophet* re-emphasises the immediacy of the prophecy and its relevance even in post-apartheid South Africa. *The Prophet* also re-invents African modernity as it explores the hybrid nature of African identity. Bailey draws together elements of Indian madras with a greater pan-African identity as he has the ancestors sing songs from the whole of Africa and all of the cultures that have contributed to the modern identity. His integrative project, including the plays *Ipi Zombi?* (*Plays of Miracle and Wonder* 39–76) and *I-Mumbo Jumbo* (*Plays of Miracle and Wonder* 105–43) are exciting as possibilities for theatre and the ancestral spirits to become a site for the creation of a new South African identity.

Dhlomo's political message was carefully hidden under a shroud of religiosity that would satisfy the desire for *l'art pour l'art* and religiosity advocated by his publisher. However, if the "Bible message" was what Shepherd desired most in African literature (qtd in *Shepherd of Lovedale* 149), the Lovedale press had struck gold in 1925 with the publication of a play by Mary Waters: *The Light—Ukukanya: A Drama of the History of the Bantus 1600–1924*. Waters was an enigmatic, if somewhat peripheral figure: the daughter of a missionary in Tembuland (situated in the north-eastern parts of emaXhoseni), she attended Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where she wrote her first play, *u-Nongqause: Isiganeko so ku xelwa kwe nkomo 1857* (Nongqause: The Story of the Cattle Killing of 1857). After graduating, Waters taught at Nyanga Institute in Johannesburg, where, by all accounts, *u-Nongqause* was first performed (it was only published in 1924[27]). After several unsuccessful attempts at retirement, Mary Waters

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[27] In a personal communication, Jeff Opland drew my attention to the fact that Waters may not originally have written her play in Xhosa. Writing about a later publication by Waters, he notes:

> *Amabali neziganeko zokulinganiswa zasemaphandleni ezilungele izikolo ezikhulu* contains two narratives, on Dick King and Livingstone, and two plays, *Ukukhanya*…and *Nongqawuse*. Before the title page there is a page headed *Abaguquli*, translators. Jabavu is listed as the translator of the King piece, Jolobe of the Livingstone, Bangeni and Mr (probably B.E.N.) Mahlasela produces a new version of the *Nongqawuse*. This suggests Waters writes in English. I must have seen Koti as the translator in the 1924 version… (Email to P. Midgley, dated May 30, 2003).

The 1924 version of *U-Nongqause* does not mention a translator, and no mention is made of anyone by the name of Koti. However, B.E.N. Mahlasela, *A General Survey of Xhosa Literature From Its Early Beginnings in the 1800s to the Present*, Working Paper 2 (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Dept. of African Languages, 1973) 11, notes that the play was written in collaboration with Rev. C. Koti, but he does not elaborate on the nature of the collaboration. It is uncertain whether Waters initially wrote the play in English or in Xhosa, so although hers is the first play to be published in Xhosa, the

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died while teaching at a mission school on the island of St. Helena.[28]

Herbert Dhlomo may well have been prompted to write his own play on the subject of Nongqawuse after seeing a production of an English version of *u-Nongqause*. In *The New African*, Tim Couzens notes that one of the first plays performed by the Johannesburg-based Bantu Dramatic and Operatic Society after its inception in 1932 was *u-Nongqause* (175). In his review of the performance, Dhlomo wrote that "the day may come when the Bantu race will produce a Bernard Shaw to dramatize the story of Nongqause and reveal to humanity the greatness of her soul, notwithstanding the destructiveness of her dreams" ("Bantu Dramatic Society Stages its First Show").

The differences between the two stage versions of the Great Cattle Killing are striking. It is evident from the start that Dhlomo's version of Nongqawuse's story was intended as a revision of Waters's rendition. He uses virtually the same set of characters as Waters and focuses on the same sequence of events as she does. However, whereas Dhlomo uses the Great Cattle Killing to signify a moment that forges the awakening of modern African political resistance, Waters explicitly calls it a "story" in her foreword: Through the play, students were able "to witness the story of their grandparents, and at the same time [it] was educational and helped them with their studies." At the heart of her play about Nongqawuse is "a beautiful story of the amaXhosa nation."[29] The events become a fabrication, opening the history to manipulation and interpretation.

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distinction of actually writing the first Xhosa play may in fact belong to G.B. Sinxo, whose play, *Imfene kaDebeza*, was published by Lovedale in 1926.

[28] Her contribution was recognized when the Coloured School in Grahamstown was named after her. Biographical information on Mary Waters is taken from Guy Butler's short note "Mary Waters: One for a Halo?" *The Centenary of Women on Campus. UCT 1886–1986* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1986) 7.

[29] Waters notes that the play "portrayed the ability of the black person to act" (Introduction). In this she reflects a similar attitude to R.H.W. Shepherd, who saw this as a reason to exploit the missionary potential of drama (qtd in Oosthuizen, *Shepherd of Lovedale* 149).

In contrast to Dhlomo, who takes possession of the history and acknowledges it as part of the fabric of African modernity, Waters consciously destabilizes the authority of amaXhosa history as a series of formative events in a modern society by setting the "truth" of the Xhosa ancestors against that of the Bible. In the opening scene of the play, the Reverend takes Governor to see the foundations of a new church that is being built at the mission. During their conversation, they remark about the new building:

> *i-Ruluneli:* Zindaba ezi mnandi ezi. Izi pako zama-Xosa, bubuvila, kukungazi, noku nqul'iminyanya. Kodwa ke akwanazo impawu ezintle, ezalata ukuba banokuba sisizwe esikulu.
>
> *u-Mfundisi (Ete kunubembe)*: Mnumzetu, eyona ndoqo yotshaba lwa ma-Xosa kukunqul' iminyanya. Ngamatola la atintela umsebenzi ka-Krestu. Betu, akwaba besinokubafundisa aba bantu, baqonde ukuba bayaxokiswa ngaba bakohlisi basebenza ububi.
>
> [*Governor*: This is good news. The attributes of the amaXhosa are laziness, ignorance, and ancestral worship. Nevertheless, they do have good attributes that show their potential to become a great nation.
>
> *Reverend* (*Downhearted*): Sir, the actual enemy of the amaXhosa is their belief in ancestors. The shamans obstruct the work of Christ. Man, how I hope that we could teach these people to understand that these liars who do evil are fooling them.[30]]
>
> (*u-Nongqause* 1–2)

Since the converts built this church through their own labours, the governor notes that despite their "laziness and ignorance," the amaXhosa "do have good attributes" and can still be rescued.[31] However, as the Reverend points out, this hope rests on an important caveat: overcoming the hold of the ancestors over the amaXhosa. In contrast to Dhlomo, who tries to negotiate the complexity of the ancestors' place in a modern society, the Reverend presents the prophecies of the *amagqira* and the messages from the *iminyanya* as destructive lies. In their place, he offers the amaXhosa a new world view that calls for a complete rejection of traditional practices. At the end of the first scene (as indeed, at the end of almost every other scene in the play), the Reverend reads a lengthy passage from the Bible. For Waters, there is no middle road, as there is for Ntsikana or Ndawo. Rather than attempt to rehabilitate the ancestors, Waters dismisses them outright.

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[30] Translation by Nathi and Zanele Mkosi.

[31] Laziness is often presented as a trait of barbarism and lack of civilization. The opposite, by implication, is the virtue of hard labour, exemplified by the civilized, Christian English—in this instance, the reverend. See in this regard Barrow's depiction of Boer farmers as lazy and the related description of Hottentots in Adriaan Francken's *Susanna Reyniers: Blijspel* (Amsterdam/Pretoria: J. de Bussy, 1908) .

Nongqawuse's appearance in *u-Nongqause* is just as brief as it is in *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, but unlike Dhlomo's Nongqawuse who is troubled by the dangerous potential of her vision, Waters's Nongqawuse lacks agency: when she re-enacts her vision, it is a drug-induced spectacle that is manipulated by Mhlakaza.[32] In a manner that recalls the introduction of the African minister, Laputa, in John Buchan's *Prester John* (12–14), Mhlakaza is presented as a sorcerer bent over his cauldron, brewing an unholy concoction that aims to destroy the Europeans. He is both a revolutionary and the antichrist—a peddler in black magic. Whereas the real Nongqawuse is not forced to prophesy, Mhlakaza forces the Nongqawuse of the play to relate her dream. As her prophecy is violently torn from her body, her words reveal the fear of one who is forced to relate the arrival of the apocalypse:

> Pulapula, iyateta! Amazwi ayo axela ukudandateka: Siyibonile imbubo yohlanga lwetu, ukubandezelwa nga-Belungu; Asisenako ukuti cwaka, siya kuza kulusindisa uhlanga lwetu entshabalalweni. *(Intombazana itwabulula izandla.)* Iminyanya indisa kwelinye ilizwe, kwilizwe lokufa. Ndibona ingxokolo yenkomo ezifileyo, isibaka-baka sipitizela amaxalanga nontloyiya; izisele zize, ilizwe limfa-nkungu ngumququ opetshetwa ngumoya, ndibuhlungu emxelweni kwelo

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[32] In his 1985 reworking of the story, *The Killing of the Cattle*, Chris Mann also presents Mhlakaza as a manipulative uncle who forces Nongqawuse to "see" what he tells her to. In this way, he turns Nongqawuse into the victim of a larger political plot. Mann also focuses on the larger interactions that take place between the amaXhosa and the Settlers, on the importance of negotiating a settlement. It is through negotiation that the individual will be able to find a space to occupy within a larger, unified community. However, Mann does not dwell on the confusion and self-doubt that accompanies this process.

> lizwe lokufa. Iyandibiza, iyandibiza, indibezela kwelesitatu ilizwe, kwilizwe lovuko. Kawuve, kawuve, bati, buti bakudlula ubusika kungene intloko-plaza; kuti kwakudlula ukufa kungene uvuko. Ndiya libona ilizwe lama-Xosa, lizwe elikulu. Intlanti zizele zinkomo, indlezana ziya nxakama. Emasimim indyebo ayi nganganto. Ndibona amabuto ngamabuto, izimpi zama-Xosa-izimpi ezinkulu. Ndiyalubona ke olo luhlanga, kulo akuko nanye into endala.
>
> [Listen, they speak! Their words say they are sad: We have seen the death of our nation, their oppression by Whites; we cannot anymore keep quiet, we are going to save our nation from destruction. *(The girl wrings her hands.)* The ancestors are taking me to another world. The world of death. I see carcasses of dead cattle, roaming the heavens are vultures and eagle; the barns are empty, the world is deathly misty by the remains scattered by the wind, my soul is hurt in that land of death. It calls me, it calls me, it calls me to the third land, the land of resurrection. Listen, listen, they say, when winter passes spring sets in; if death passes then resurrection enters. I see the land of the amaXhosa, a big land. The kraal full of cattle, the pregnant bellows. The fields are fertile beyond comprehension. I see regiments upon regiments, amaXhosa warriors—great warriors. I see therefore this nation among whom nothing is old.]
>
> (*u-Nongqause* 5)

This Nongqawuse is also a martyr, but one whose painful duty it is to announce the death of her people, not to exemplify their spirit of resistance. Her vision is reminiscent of Dante's Inferno in *The Divine Comedy*—a world filled with death and destruction. Beyond this world awaits resurrection in a world where the old has been cast off completely. In this new world there is a nation "among whom nothing is old." The emphasis on complete renewal marks a shift from Nongqawuse's original vision, in which she had seen the rejuvenation of the old and the infirm within a traditional frame of reference. Instead, Waters makes the reference pertinent to a complete destruction of the societal structure among the amaXhosa. Immediately following Nongqawuse's vision in the play, the Reverend reads from 1 Samuel 28:3–20. His message supersedes Nongqawuse's apocalyptic vision, but at the same time also reinforces it: After the death of Samuel, Saul had banned all "evil spirits"[33] from the kingdom. Yet, in desperation, he himself seeks out a medium, who calls up the spirit of Samuel. Saul learns that because he trusted in "evil spirits," he is to lose his kingdom to David, who has remained faithful to God. Nongqawuse becomes an "evil spirit" who tells the amaXhosa that their belief in the ancestral spirits will destroy their nation and that they will have a new king.

After her prophecy, Nongqawuse falls silent, and it is Mhlakaza who offers King Sarhili an interpretation of her dream. Gxabagxaba, a senior councillor at the king's court, commands Mhlakaza to speak:

> *u-Gxabagxaba:* Kautsho! Bati bafuna ni?
>
> *u-Mhlakaza:* Bati inkomo mazixelwe, amazimba alahlwe.
>
> *u-Gxabagxaba:* Kautsho! Batini ngo-Mlungu?
>
> *u-Mhlakaza: (walata ngentonga yahe hwa-Mfundisi)* Abelungu aba baya kutshayelelwa elwandle sisagwiti. Yeha, ke, kuni nina bantundini, ukuba anilipulapulanga ilizwi lamanyange, nani zinkosi nditsho kuni, ukuba aniyipumelelisi imiyalelo yeminyanya.
>
> *u-Gxabagxaba:* Wena ke, Sanuse, Camagu lakomkulu, utete amazwi amakulu. Kausipe ixesha sike sicinge, siwangqula ngqule amazwi ako.

> [*Gxabagxaba*: Speak! What do they say they want?
>
> *Mhlakaza*: They say they want the cattle slaughtered and the barley thrown away.
>
> *Gxabagxaba*: Speak! What do they say about the Whites?
>
> *Mhlakaza* (*Mhlakaza points with his stick to the house of the reverend*): These whites would be swept to the sea by a whirlwind. Yes, to you people, if you don't listen to the word of the spirits, you

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[33] Waters quotes from the KJV of the Bible; the NIV speaks of "fortune tellers," a term that drives home the interpretation Waters suggests in this passage even more.

> kings included, I tell you if you don't fulfill the commands of the spirits.
>
> *Gxabagxaba*: You traditional doctor, Comforter of the Great Place,[34] you have spoken great words. Please give us some time to think, so as to reflect on your words.]
>
> (10)

Mhlakaza's interpretation is, at best, tenuously connected to Nongqawuse's vision, thus emphasising her role as a pawn in a larger game. After this initial scene, Nongqawuse virtually disappears from the play and what we witness is the cataclysmic aftermath of her prophecies. The councillors realize the misleading words of a false prophet, and reject the vision and its interpretation. In the final scene of the play, Mhlakaza and Nongqawuse move across the stage, gnawing bones as they journey (19). The instruction is specifically noted in the didascalia (19), signifying the interpretation the playwright wants to present to the audience. Nongqawuse is reduced to eating the bones of the ancestors: eating macabre humble pie and enacting the hardship and the suffering of her people most vividly. In Waters's rendition of events, there is no hope in Nongqawuse's message, no sense of reconciling divergent belief systems, as there is in Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save*.

As Nongqawuse and Mhlakaza fall down by the roadside and die, Mhlakaza lays the blame for the tragedy on Sarhili's insistent adherence to the call to slaughter cattle, and laments the fact that he himself had listened to those fatal orders. As if to underscore Mhlakaza's lamentations, Sarhili enters and admits to bringing hunger, death and destruction to his people. Both Sarhili and Mhlakaza, the interpreters of Nongqawuse's dream, admit that their interpretation of the dream was wrong. Waters is not one to rely on subtlety when it comes to matters as important as the interpretation of Nongqawuse's vision: The final scene opens with the governor saying to his wife, "Azi ukuba eli lizwe liya kuba yinina, kobu bubi bungaka bulihleyo" (I wonder what will happen to this world, when this bad occurrence has befallen it—20). In a blatant contortion of historical fact, the Governor laments his inability to stop the carnage. The Reverend intervenes on his behalf, absolving him of blame:

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[34] Gxabagxaba calls Mhlakaza "Camagu," the name reserved for a diviner whose task it is to propitiate the ancestral spirits.

> *u-Mfundisi:* Mna, Mnumzetu, nditi sisandla sika-Tixo, Akasifundisi yini kakade, izifundo ezingayo inyaniso ngenzima ezi? Ama-Xosa akayi kuti emva koku avuke esisizwe esitsha, esihlanjululwe zimbandezelo? Akayikuti na namhlanje amandla osiyazi apulwe kuti to ngunapakade. Liyakuba lilizwe-litsha, ilizwe lobu-Krestu.
>
> [*Reverend*: Personally, sir, I say it is the hand of God. He teaches us hard lessons, doesn't he? The amaXhosa won't necessarily wake up being a new nation, which has been ridden of hardships. The power of the medicine men will be completely broken forever. It shall become a new world, a Christian world.]
>
> (*Nongqause* 20)

His final words on the Cattle Killing offer a radical reinterpretation of Nongqawuse's vision at the end of the play. In this version, the good that arises from the Cattle Killing is not *ukuhlangana*, the bringing together of opposites (as it is for Dhlomo), but the total destruction of the old.

A year after publishing *u-Nongqause*, Waters published an English play, *Ukukanya—The Light. A Drama of the History of the Bantus 1600–1924*. The full title indicates the epic ambitions of this work. Miraculously, Waters manages to reduce the history of the amaXhosa, the Setswana, the baSotho and the amaZulu into a mere 36 pages. This feat is made possible only because the play is focused around the arrival and gradual acceptance of The Light among the Bantu people.

The story of Nongqawuse and the Cattle Killing occupies a central space in this drama, but if Nongqawuse's role in the tragedy had been minimized in *u-Nongqause*, it has now become virtually non-existent. Instead, we see at length the counsel between Sarhili and Mhlakaza. Mhlakaza merely reports Nongqawuse's vision, and at the end, Sarhili trusts his interpretation without reserve, saying, "Thou has spoken. The order will be given to drive the white man into the sea" (17). Nongqawuse's prophecy has become Mhlakaza's word. Acting on this word, Sarhili leads his people to destruction with the fervour of a zealot. Although his councillors advise him to listen to the white man's warning, and thus prevent the loss of the nation (16), Sarhili continues to advocate the slaughter of the cattle.

In a repetition of the penultimate scene of *u-Nongqause*, Mhlakaza and Nongqawuse again wander across the stage gnawing bones. Where Nongqawuse had been implicated in the Cattle Killing in the first play by actively presenting her vision on stage, here we see only the devastating effects of Mhlakaza's interpretation and Sarhili's implementation of the vision. The vision itself is written out of the play, for, as Herbert Dhlomo shows in *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, it is too ambiguous and revolutionary. Presenting a moment of such symbolic significance on stage detracts from the lies and deception that become so visible in the way that it is interpreted. As Mhlakaza and Nongqawuse walk across the stage, Mhlakaza laments the fact that he acted on Sarhili's command to slaughter his cattle:

> Ah! Sareli [sic], would that I had not listened.
> Ah! Sareli, why did you deceive me.
> In your thirst for blood
> Thou hast killed the people.
> Woe to Umhlakaza the Seer.
>
> (*Ukukanya* 19)

In his repentance, Mhlakaza envisions himself, not Nongqawuse, as the Seer. By taking upon himself her role as instigator and announcer of the sequence of events, he effectively silences Nongqawuse. By putting Nongqawuse's prophecy in the mouth of a different speaker, Waters is able to legitimize her own interpretation of the vision.[35]

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[35] This rendition of Mhlakaza's role in the Cattle Killing becomes even more interesting in the light of recently unearthed archival material written by Reverend H.W. Waters, Mary Waters's father, about Mhlakaza's identity. For a discussion of Rev. Waters's references relating to the identity of Mhlakaza/Goliat and subsequent creation of a myth surrounding Mhlakaza's identity, see Sheila Boniface Davies, "Raising The Dead: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and the Mhlakaza-Goliat Delusion," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* (forthcoming).

When Mhlakaza dies, Sarhili again comes on stage to offer his own moment of repentance when he acknowledges that he should have listened to the warnings of the white man. After hearing the two confessions, Civilization enters, revising and recontextualizing Nongqawuse's visions, in one of which she had seen the sky darken[36]:

> Alas! The darkest hour is before dawn; the light will come. This is the last struggle, and now the light will break sure and certain in a sea of blood in the east. (19)

And so, as Hugh puts it in Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, the "Xhosa national soil—soul—[is prepared] for the early propagation of the missionary message" (18). Waters leaves the viewer with no doubt as to the only good she can see emanating from Nongqawuse's vision: the end of the "old" Xhosa nation and the advent of a "new," Christianized people. Where Dhlomo had seen the spark of resistance, Waters sees only death and destruction.

Waters's interpretation of Sarhili's confession signals yet another important difference in the way the writers envisioned the history on which they built their respective plays. The 26-year old Sarhili had become king in 1835 after his father, King Hintsa, was murdered by British troops when he tried to escape from custody after he had trusted a British invitation to negotiate peace during the Sixth Frontier War. In the turmoil that ensued, Xhosa resistance was crushed and the British annexed the territory between the Kei and Keiskamma Rivers that traditionally belonged to the Gcaleka Xhosa. Sarhili may have inherited his father's title, but he did not immediately inherit the power and respect his father had won: his father and mother were estranged, and Sarhili grew up with his mother. When Sarhili became king, Hintsa's Great Councillors retained much of his power. The early years of Sarhili's reign were characterized by a desperate struggle to be recognized by his people. Finally, in 1847, he was able to secure his authority and established his Great Place at Hohita, from where he went on to become a highly respected and much-loved king. Until the catastrophe of 1856–57, Sarhili had barely lost any of his territory to the Europeans and had survived three Frontier Wars, during which his Great Place became a refuge to those Xhosa who were evicted from their ancestral lands by the British. Clearly, the presence of an impenetrable refuge like Hohita irked the colonial government, for after seeing the amaXhosa starve for several months, the Governor, Sir George Grey, sent the colonial troops to occupy Sarhili's territory and destroy his Great Place. An uneasy peace ensued, and in 1865 Sarhili was allowed to reoccupy the coastal portion of his land, far from his erstwhile Great Place. Sarhili tried to maintain the peace, but he could not restrain his followers, and war broke out again in 1877. Sarhili cast his lot with his people and fought against the colonizers one last time. A price of £1,000 was put on his head, but he was never caught. The last king of an independent Xhosa nation retreated to an inaccessible hideout in Bomvanaland, a territory to the east of his erstwhile kingdom, where he remained as a recluse until his death in 1893 at the age of 83.

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[36] Jeff Peires notes that "On the great day, two suns would rise red in the sky over the mountain Ntaba kaNdoda where they would collide and darkness would cover the earth" (*The Dead Will Arise* 98).

Although Sarhili did indeed accept blame for the events of 1856–1857 (*The Dead Will Arise* 158), this did not necessarily mean that he had rejected either the prophecies or the advice of Mhlakaza, as subsequent developments clearly indicate. He admitted that he had led his people into the catastrophe, but also blamed the *amagogotya* for not believing in the prophecies. Waters turns both Nongqawuse's vision and Sarhili's heroic efforts at resistance into passing events in the greater drama of man's existence on earth—a necessary diversion in God's Great Plan for humankind. By contrast, in Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, King Sarhili remains defiant up to his last words in the play, thus manifesting on stage Dhlomo's own interpretation of Nongqawuse's vision as a call to resist to the end, to take part in a new national sacrifice.

Dhlomo's play was undoubtedly intended to offer a corrective to Waters' interpretation of the history of Nongqawuse, but it was also intended as an alternative point of view to that suggested by another African writer, B.W. Vilakazi, in his attempt to invoke the spirit of Nongqawuse as Muse. Vilakazi was born at Groutville mission station to two devoutly Christian parents in 1906. He was educated first at Groutville and later at the Mariannhill mission station, where he took a teacher-training course. The environment of the mission school suited him well and allowed him to pursue his own academic interests. In 1935, Vilakazi became the first African to be appointed to an academic rank at a white university when he became a language assistant in the Department of African Languages at the University of the Witwatersrand. This appointment also allowed him to pursue his postgraduate work at the university, and he obtained his Ph.D. in 1946.

Vilakazi's position among the African intelligentsia was precarious. Although they generally respected his achievements, for political reasons they did not necessarily support his appointment at a white university. As a result, Vilakazi withdrew from his peers and he developed the reputation of being distant and aloof. Yet outside the circles of the intelligentsia, Vilakazi was respected and well-liked among his people.[37] As Attwell has pointed out, Vilakazi, like many of his educated contemporaries, saw himself as a spokesperson for his people and he tried to voice their aspirations in his writing ("Modernizing Tradition"). Although he died young, Vilakazi left a legacy that established him as one of the most influential Zulu writers of the twentieth century: in addition to his academic achievements, he also published two volumes of poetry, three novels and several articles in academic journals.

Vilakazi's first collection of poems, *Ikhondlo kaZulu* (Zulu Songs) appeared in 1935. In many of the poems in the collection, Vilakazi experimented with the use of rhyme in Zulu poetry—with mixed results. It is on account of these poems that Dhlomo and Vilakazi later became involved in a heated and extended confrontation that dealt in part with the way the two writers plied their craft. However, while the debate became public in 1939, the divergence of opinion had already started with the publication of *Inkondlo kaZulu*. Dhlomo wanted to create literary dramas, in part, because he knew only too well how powerful the written word could be as a political weapon. Not only did Dhlomo feel that Vilakazi was approaching the craft of writing from the wrong angle, he also felt that Vilakazi was misreading the nature and function of African tradition. In a seminal article, "Drama and the African" (1936),[38] Dhlomo laid out a blueprint for African drama. The article appeared in the *South African Outlook* shortly before he submitted his play, "Cetshwayo," to the Lovedale Press. As I have argued elsewhere, the article was intended to soften Shepherd's views on the nature of African drama so that he would read "Cetshwayo" with greater sympathy.[39] However, "Drama and the African" can also be read as an initial response to Vilakazi's approach to African literature in *Inkondlo kaZulu*. Dhlomo begins his argument with a bold statement on the nature of African drama:

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[37] Biographical information was assimilated from C.L.S. Nyembezi's biographical introduction to *Zulu Horizons* (Johannesburg: Wits, 1973) xiii–xx.

> Action! Rhythm! Emotion! Gestures! Imitation! Desires! That is what drama was before it developed into an institution for propaganda, the propagation of ideas, or commercialised entertainment. ("Drama and the African" 3)

He then goes on to argue that drama and poetry are closely related, thus implying that what had been said regarding drama was equally true about poetry. Despite his apparent dismissal of the politicised nature of modern drama (he was after all writing for a Lovedale publication), his implication is clear: Although action, rhythm, gestures, imitation and desires were the things that had previously characterized African drama (and poetry), things had changed; now these artistic forms *were* to be used for the propagation of ideas and propaganda, for shaping African identity and advancing their political ideals as much as they had to reflect the nature of the human spirit. For Dhlomo, it was this task of propagating ideas that did not manifest itself strongly enough in Vilakazi's poetry.

Dhlomo's initial qualms about Vilakazi's poetry seem to have been quelled with the appearance of his second volume of poetry, *Amal'ezulu* (1945), which contained several poems that were far more political in nature than those in his first collection.

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[38] For ease of reference and general availability, I quote from the *English in Africa* 4.2 reprints of all Dhlomo's major theoretical essays.

[39] See Midgley, "Author, Ideology, Publisher," 134–50.

Among these is the poem most often anthologized, "Ezinkomponi" (At the Gold Mines), in which Vilakazi speaks in the voice of the mineworkers who toil underground in appalling conditions. Using a traditional praise format, Vilakazi's poem is a harsh indictment of mining companies' treatment of workers in the compounds. Dhlomo clearly approved of the more political nature of the poems, for in his review of the collection, he wrote:

> In the past, Vilakazi's poetry revealed the mind of a scholar obsessed with the idea of classicism, an artist worshipping devoutly in the shrine of art for art's sake, a poet so enamoured of the beauty and music and meaning of Nature that he was oblivious of the grim tragedy, the struggle, the pathetic conditions and the call of his people .... [However,] this is the new Vilakazi. We think that by identifying himself with the struggles of his people, the poet has gained in breadth, strength and stature. ("Dr. B.W. Vilakazi: Poet" 63–64)

If Waters' interpretation of Nongqawuse's prophecy had fuelled Dhlomo's resolve to write his own account of the events, then Vilakazi's poem about Nongqawuse in *Inkondlo kaZulu* fed an already raging fire. "Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa" (The Xhosa Calamity) did not offer the radical reinterpretation of the Cattle Killing Dhlomo had called for subsequent to seeing the performance of *u-Nongqause*; rather, it confirmed Waters' reading of the events by blaming Nongqawuse for a century of suffering as a result of her "cruel deception" (8).

Vilakazi's poem opens with a brief account of messengers spreading the instructions of the prophecy. Nongqawuse's authority is immediately drawn into question when the narrator emphasises that

> Layiza intokazi kaMhlakaza
> Yon' eyayiwabonile lawo
> Mathong' okoko bay' abanganazange
> Baze bawaikaze ngamehlo.

("Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa" 2)

> [They harkened to Mhlakaza's daughter
> Who seemed so wise, for she had seen
> Ancestral spirits never glimpsed by them,
> Ever invisible to their naked eyes.]

(*Zulu Horizons* 18)[40]

Not only does Nongqawuse merely "seem" wise, she also claims to have seen what others have not seen before. After this introduction, the poem proceeds to describe the day when the ancestors were supposed to have risen from the sea. Those gathered at the meeting-place appear jovial and the subject of regaining their youth dominates their talk, thus pushing into the background an all-important part of Nongqawuse's vision—the victory over the Europeans that the arrival of the ancestors was meant to facilitate.

The revolutionary potential of Nongqawuse's prophecy is undermined even further when, like Waters, Vilakazi draws biblical parallels against which Nongqawuse's dreams are shown to be false and destructive. The jubilation at the festivities is cut short by the doleful interjection of the narrator describing the consequences of the Cattle Killing:

Beka izibaya nezinxuluma
Khukamisile, lezoziprofitho
Zamandikikazi akaXhosa
Aphupha njengoJosef' e Gibithe
Kepha won' ephupha imbubiso
Yenzalo yaowyise oMlanjeni.

...

Likhul' igama lakho Nongqawuze

(3)

[Ah! See the empty homes and cattle-folds
Bold were those loud-mouthed
Prophecies The Xhosa spirits uttered
Who dreamed as Joseph when in Egypt dreamed;
But theirs were dreams of ruin and doom

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[40] I am using Florence Louie Friedman's translation in *Zulu Horizons* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1962) 17–24, for reasons of availability. However, I do recognize that these are not literal translations.

For the children of such fathers as Mlanjeni.

…

Ah! Nongqawuze, worthy are you of fame!]

(6)

Joseph's dream,[41] in which his brothers and even his father bowed down to him, came true; Nongqawuse's vision of a victory for the amaXhosa, on the other hand, was proven false. Vilakazi calls Nongqawuse's prophecy a "cruel deceit" (20) and a "cruel deception" (23) turning her into a "tawdry prophetess" and an "impostor" who must bear the guilt for the suffering of subsequent generations (24).

In *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, Dhlomo had attempted to bring African traditions and the spirits of the ancestors to life on stage and to interrogate their meaning and importance within a modern, urban environment. In contrast, Vilakazi speaks of the ancestors, warriors and heroes

Kuzo izigodlo zamathongo,
Ayesakhathele, eszunywe
Ubuthongo phezu kwezicephu
Zamafu, nezowandle, nezokhamba.

(2)

[Whose voiceless voices can be heard
Within the shrines of those long vanished.
But now they are forlorn and overcome,
Benumbed in sleep upon their mats
Of cloud and sea and corn.]

(20)

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[41] See Gen 37: 1–11 and Gen 42–45.

These ancestors are dead, to rise no more and infuse the people of today with a revolutionary spirit. While their loss is mourned, and they need to be remembered and respected, their role in modern society is limited, for

Thin' esizalwe nkathi yanamuhla
Sidlul' ezikundleni zaMalinda
Samangal' ubulima bawokoko
Nokulutheka okungasandile.

(5)

[…we, their children, alive today,
Passing Malinda's judgement places,[42]
Marvel at our forebears' folly—
At fraud which could not cheat us now.]

(22)

Yet Vilakazi cannot deny the very real presence of the ancestral spirits in the present—despite what he sees as their limited importance—since the people mentioned in the poem still fear the bones of the ancestors and pass their burial places with trepidation, fearful of the ancestral spirits and the words they might speak. Vilakazi iterates the very real dilemma that faces him and other modern Africans: a traditional world view may longer hold sway, yet it continues to inform the very air we breathe.

Vilakazi does not attempt to resolve this cultural impasse, but embraces it after a fashion. His narrator uses the reality of the presence of the *iminyanya* to drive home the folly of Nongqawuse's vision. Looking out from the safety of their huts, people still watch Nongqawuse "fleeing the earth with nimble feet" and haunting the superstitious memories of the people:

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[42] Literally: "at the homesteads of Amalinde." Amalinde was the place where the battle between Ngqika and Ndlambe was fought in 1919. It was around this time that Makanda, later known as Nxele, first prophesied a millenarian message to the amaXhosa, calling for some kind of sacrifice.

Sibuye siy' ezangomeni zethu
Zishaye phans' ithambo nezinkwindi
Zisong' izandla ngendabuk' enkhulu
Zisitshel' ukuthi uNongqawuze
Usagcin' inhlawulo yamang' akhe.

(6)

[Trembling we go to our diviners
And watch them throw the bones and shells,
And fold their trembling hands in sorrow,
Saying that Nongqawuse still
Must suffer for her cruel deception.]

(23)

Unlike Dhlomo, who turned Nongqawuse into a heroic figure, Vilakazi blames her for a century of African pain and suffering—much like Waters does. As an antidote to this foolishness, he holds up the examples of new leaders that include John Knox Bokwe[43] and D.D.T. Jabavu, individuals who "rose, set forth, [and] acquired learning," and whose force "made all things clean / … / skimmed the debris and the scum." Their learning, he intimates, has cleared the debris left by the false prophecies of Nongqawuse. Where, he asks, are the chiefs of old? Gone. Gone as a result of Nongqawuse's folly. To him, she is no heroic figure, but a millstone:

Nongqaquze, wena mprophethikazi,
Siphi izintombi zaizolo na?
Ziph izintombi zakuthangi na?
Nomhlambi wamathole nezimvana?
Okush' okudala, okuhl' okubi
Yebo, konke lokho, nikubekephi?
Konke kupheshuliwe yiw' umoya
washabalalis' okwefu, nekungu.
Zindaba zakho Nongqawuzendini!

(6–7)

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[43] Bokwe was an influential African minister. His biography was written by S.E.K. Mqhayi (*u-John Knox Bokwe* [Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1925]).

[Ah, Nongqawuze, tawdry prophetess!
Where are the maids of yesterday,
And where the maids of days before?
Where are the herds, the calves and lambs,
The new, the old, the good, the bad?
Yes, where, because of you, are these?—
Wasted by winds, scattered by storms,
Vanished like clouds, dissolved like mist!
Yours is the guilt Nongqawuze, yours,
O impostor!]

(24)

Vilakazi's interrogation of Nongqawuse's prophecies singles her out as a destructive force. It is her superstition that caused the downfall of her people, and he holds her up to his contemporaries as a warning, lest they again be deluded by such old follies.

The dissent between Dhlomo and Vilakazi was symptomatic of an increased polarity throughout South African society: African leaders were divided about the best way to prevent the maelstrom of white politics from engulfing them completely and they struggled among themselves to gain control of the limited political means at their disposal; among the white citizenry, English South Africans and Afrikaners alike watched with increasing frustration as politicians attempted to maintain the illusion of unity in a fragile coalition government. The coalition government did collapse, emphasising once more that the divisions created by the South African War were still strong in the collective memory.

Despite the legal entrenchment of segregation through such measures as the Land Act of 1913 and the Coloured Voters' Bills, the spectre of nineteenth-century liberal assimilationism still lingered in liberal circles. For this minority, which included blacks as well as whites, South Africa's successful transition into twentieth-century modernity hinged on a shift in focus from a traditional world view to one in which western education and Christianity lay central—although these liberals, too, were beginning to incorporate segregationist discourse into their thinking. By singling out both Bokwe and Jabavu as symbols of African modernity, Vilakazi echoed the position held by Christian liberals such as Mary Waters, who had used her reading of

Nongqawuse and the Cattle Killing to bolster a vision of African modernity that relied on rejecting the past and gradually working towards assimilation into a new, Christianised society. For her, the exploration of the Cattle Killing had less to do with establishing the premise of a new African identity than it did with assuring that her own Eurocentric world view remained unchallenged.

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Just as revealing Nongqawuse's folly still left Vilakazi struggling to reconcile the two worlds he inhabited,[44] so ensuring the primacy of a white, Eurocentric world view by indicating the folly of the African ancestors did not automatically assure whites of a stable sense of belonging in the country. While Africans could turn to several African heroes in an attempt to forge a historical sense of belonging, the task of finding workable euro-colonial models proved to be more difficult. A tiny minority of white intellectuals, including William Plomer, attempted to connect directly with an African past and to unsettle the strictly Eurocentric conceptualisation of belonging.[45] In "The Strandloopers," Plomer had made use of the erased presence of the coastal hunter-gatherers to inscribe a place for euro-colonials. The success of Plomer's effort was limited, in part, because his attempt to find a point of confluence between African tradition and Europe was the exception rather than the rule. For the most part, writers and intellectuals emphasised perceived differences, and carefully whittled away at the edges of the fissures that existed in South African society, thus increasing the cultural distance between the people of the country. The majority of white writers approached history with a greater sense of caution than Plomer did, often holding it up as a rebuke to the present generation—no-one more so than Sarah Gertrude Millin.

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[44] In his poem "Imfundo ephakeme (Higher Education)," Vilakazi considers the dual presence of "books / Written by the white man" and "black poets," noting that "Namhla aben'ekhanda lami" (today they quarrel in my mind)," *Amal'ezulu* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1945) 7–8; trans. in *Zulu Horizons* 82–83).

[45] W.G. Bennie and Francis Carey Slater come to mind.

Although *God's Step-Children* (1924) had ensured Millin an international reputation early in her career, the book was not well received in South Africa. This was, in part, because South African readers at the time did not respond to her conceptualisation of race and blood and the destructive effects of miscegenation, framed as it was in terms of European biological racism. Michael Green attempts to explain a crucial question surrounding the reception of the novel: if South African readers largely rejected the ideology underlying *God's Step-Children*, and if her later novel, *King of the Bastards*, was a more accurate reflection of the contemporary ideological position of white South Africans towards race, he asks, "why do critics continue to treat *God's Step-children* as *the* indicator of South African racism in literature?" (*Novel Histories* 120). Green argues convincingly that it was the result of "cultural lag" and that in some respects Millin was ahead of her reading public in her conceptualisation of segregation in terms of biological race and blood (122). In formulating his argument, Green follows Paul Rich's proposal that while Americans had for some time employed theories of biological racial inferiority to support racial segregation, in South Africa, "the concept of territorial racial separation acted as a form of cultural and ideological buffer" in pre-Union South Africa (*White Power and the Liberal Conscience* 5). However, as African urbanisation increased following the formation of the Union, this "buffer" disintegrated and white South Africans were forced to reconsider their conceptualisation of racial segregation. As a consequence, although "Millin's ideas on blood and race, and the complex of feelings that underlay these ideas, changed little between 1920 and 1950" (J.M. Coetzee, *White Writing* 150n.7), those of her reading public did, and by the time she published *King of the Bastards* in 1949),[46] Millin's views reflected those of her

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[46] Sarah Gertrude Millin rejected assimilationism in any form in *God's Stepchildren*. If Andrew Flood had anything to teach modern South Africans, it was about the inherent dangers of miscegenation—a theme that would recur throughout Millin's fiction. She was writing for a different audience: her task was not to educate the Native, but to

Cont next page....

readers more closely. By this time, of course, international opinion on racial segregation had changed, and while *King of the Bastards* was rejected internationally, in South Africa it became Millin's biggest commercial success.

This crucial shift in perceptions among white South Africans suggests that "the literary-historical emphasis on *God's Step-Children* has led to an underestimation in social history of [Millin's] later novels" (*Novel Histories* 122), a fact that raises another pertinent question for Green:

> It is perhaps worth wondering whether this underestimation [of the importance of *King of the Bastards* as a reflection of contemporary white South African ideology] is a result of our being still too used to perceiving our literary history from a metropolitan perspective.

Green does not explore the significance of his own statement, but he does attempt to counterbalance the "metropolitan perspective" and to raise the prominence of Millin's later novels by focussing his subsequent discussion on *King of the Bastards* rather than on *God's Step-Children*.[47]

King of the Bastards is a fictional rendition of the life of Coenraad de Buys (or du Buis, de Buis, or simply, Buys), an intriguing figure who in many ways embodied the state of frontier identity politics at the turn of the eighteenth century. In *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (1992), Noël Mostert describes him as an almost tragic figure who straddled both the Xhosa and the Afrikaner cultures. Coenraad de Buys was born in 1761, the third generation son of a Huguenot family.[48] At a young age, he started illegally trading cattle with the amaXhosa.

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educate white South Africans. This required a different version of history—a fact that Afrikaner Nationalists understood well, but which English-speaking white South Africans seemed to have difficulty grasping.

[47] Yet, despite the convincing plea to shift critical attention to a text that seems more meaningful within a South African context, Green filters his own discussion through the lenses of two metropolitan theorists, Foucault and Jameson, and so falls into the trap he has himself noted.

[48] See the only detailed historical discussion of de Buys' life, Agatha Elizabeth

Cont next page....

Declared an outlaw by the Dutch colonial administration, Buys took refuge among the amaXhosa. When the people of Graaff-Reinet rebelled and declared themselves part of an independent republic, he tried unsuccessfully to persuade the amaXhosa to side with the Boers against the British government. During the many years he lived among the amaXhosa, de Buys entered into several traditional liaisons with women, among them a Khoi woman, Maria van der Horst, and Ngqika's widowed mother. Among the amaXhosa, de Buys was known as Khula (The Big One) and he served as a senior councillor to Ngqika. However, Peires argues that his real value to the amaXhosa lay in his ability to procure colonial gunpowder (*The House of Phalo* 52). Despite being granted amnesty and attempting to settle in the Graaff-Reinet district, Buys remained at odds with the colonial government and was ostracized by the white settlers. Consequently, he and his extended family trekked northwards, crossing the Vaal River in 1821 to settle in the Makhado (Louis Trichardt) area of the Soutpansberg. The last accounts of Buys appear around 1823, when he allegedly walked into the veld one day, never to be seen again. However, his legacy continues in oral tradition and his descendants, known as Buysvolk, still inhabit the area.

Like Ntsikana, his contemporary in emaXhoseni, Coenraad de Buys existed on the cusp of two civilizations and in many ways, he embodied the positions of *tussenskapper* and the *umhlanganisi* and lived in accordance with the world view advocated by *ukuhlangana*. However, while Ntsikana struggled to refashion the foreign world view to which he had been exposed in ways that were altogether new, de Buys moved with apparent ease between societies and cultures (Mostert 318). This ability to move between cultures threatened the racialised version of history many white South Africans, including Millin, tried to promote. Thus, where both Dhlomo and Waters had reduced Nongqawuse's visibility on stage so that they could elevate her to the position of iconic hero, Millin does the opposite with Coenraad de Buys: she pays attention to the intimate details of his life, revealing every flaw in her attempt to ensure that this "great

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Schoeman, *Coenraad de Buys: The First Transvaler* (Pretoria: Debussy, 1938).

leader" is not beatified in the way Nongqawuse was by Africans (*King of the Bastards*, "Introduction" vi); Millin wanted to ensure that if Buys ever achieved iconic status, it would not be as a hero, but as a sad villain.

In her treatment of Coenraad de Buys and the larger political forces that surrounded him, Millin engages in what Michael Green terms "historical interventionism," for "historical fiction is often produced in response to ideological and social motivations similar to those that prompt historical revisionism" (*Novel Histories* 116). That *King of the Bastards* was intended to serve as a revisionist document was duly recognized by General Smuts in his introduction to the 1949 edition:

> In our preoccupation with the Great Trek, the earlier phase of our history has been neglected. Here it stands, freed from the obscurity in which it has been buried for so long. We can now form a juster opinion of our beginnings, and of the formative forces which have shaped this history of ours. The tragedy of color which is South Africa stands revealed for all to see it, in wonder and in awe, but not in despair. (v)

Smuts recognizes the fact that it is the obscure hidden histories that have the most potential to undermine contemporary preconceptions if brought to light; that learning about these "formative forces"—ancestral figures like Coenraad de Buys—can shape our perception of history, and that, as a consequence, they have the ability to influence the way in which modern individuals perceive themselves and their society. And thus this story of Coenraad de Buys, the reflection of the "tragedy of color which is South Africa," needs to be approached with caution:

> Both the figure and the setting belong to South Africa, and form the background to the present.... Let those abroad who condemn the South Africa of today remember [its] recent pagan background. Let those again who glorify the White man remember the sinister figure of Coenraad de Buys in that panorama. (vi)

The bridge between the "pagan background" and the present is Coenraad de Buys, the "sinister figure" who, as the embodiment of what might have been, becomes the bogeyman of apartheid South Africa in Millin's narrative.

Written as it is at the dawn of the apartheid era, *King of the Bastards* can be read as an exercise in apartheid nation-building as well as a political counterpoint to Alan

Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948). The story of Coenraad de Buys, the ancestor of the Buysvolk, is framed by a discussion among his descendants about finding an appropriate place for themselves at the historic watershed moment, 1948. Some, represented in the meeting by Louis Buys, argue that they should "try for white" (*King of the Bastards* 1), while others, led by Honoratus Buys, argue that

> we are speaking of a nation—a nation of nearly three hundred people in a land of their own—whose pride, Louis's pride, is our ancestor that threw us to the Kaffirs. If you were indeed like our ancestor in your head and heart, Louis, you would not want the Buyses to try for white. You would give yourself, as he did, to the Kaffirs. (2)

It is by an act of choice that their ancestor, Coenraad de Buys, "give[s] himself…to the Kaffirs." And again at the end of the end of the novel, the Buysvolk have to face a similar choice—should they give themselves to "the Kaffirs" or should they "try for white?" We do not get to see the result of their vote, and we enter the new dispensation knowing only that choice is imminent—history has run its course and is finally exacting its toll from the present. Yet choice is important in this context, for it is this ability to choose his destiny among the people of Africa that makes Coenraad de Buys *umhlanganisi*, just as for the Buysvolk, this choice will determine whether they continue to be visible as products of this choice. For them, too, choice is important to their future sense of belonging.

From the moment the second Jean du Buis, a Huguenot settler who would become Coenraad's grandfather, sits in his saddle and comes "alive to the oneness of himself with the land so that his whole heart was in the determination to keep his place in this land" (9), to when the Buysvolk have to decide their future, the desire to belong runs through the narrative. Having decided at all costs to "keep his place in the land," Jean du Buis the second sets in motion a process through which the choices his descendants make would ultimately determine their position in a modern South Africa. It is a gradual process that follows the Boers in their trek eastward and then northward, away from the colonial epicentre in Cape Town, towards an as yet undefined sense of belonging in a nation that does not yet properly exist. As the Dutch and Huguenot settlers move away from the colonial epicentre in Cape Town, their names, like their lifestyles, change: The third Jean du Buis, we learn, "no longer called himself Jean du

Buis. A new nation was building at the Cape; the French past had been trodden out; the third Jean de Buis became Jan de Buijs or Jan de Buys or simply Jan or Johannes Buys" (16). Jean de Buis the third not only changes his name, but also his allegiance: he no longer belongs to Europe, but to that generation on whose behalf Hendrik Bibault had spoken when he said "Ik ben Afrikaander."

After this, the focus shifts from the patronymic descendant to the middle son, Coenraad. His life becomes the focus of the narrative and it is his choices that get held up as a caution in what Michael Green defines as "Morality Tales for the Immorality Act" (*Novel Histories* 123). If the changing pronunciation of Jean de Buis' name marked a shift in his sense of belonging, then the departure from the patronymic history marks an even more fateful change that was to occur during Coenraad's life. Several significant gaps occur in the historical account of Coenraad de Buys' life: one historian, Gustav Preller, suggests that he spent some time in Zululand, although Agatha Elizabeth Schoeman can find no evidence to support this, other than to note that if he did do so, he could not have done so when Preller said he did (*The First Transvaler* 68). Michael Green notes that Millin exploits these "uncertainties" to her advantage by not only accepting that he did visit Zululand, but also by taking liberties in her description and interpretation of his alleged visit (*Novel Histories* 127). In this historically unverifiable space, Coenraad meets Dingiswayo, who introduces himself as "Godongwana of the Amatetwa [sic]" (97).[49] "My people," Coenraad replies, "are Amabuna [sic]." By introducing himself and his people by the Africanised form, "Amabuna," Coenraad de Buys not only redefines the potential terms of belonging in Africa, but also makes a clear break with the past and with the rest of the settler community, for, as Millin takes care to note, "the difference between Coenraad and the trekkers who followed him was that he turned his back, not only upon some white men, but upon all white men" (187).

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[49] Godongwana was the ambitious son of the amaMthethwa chief, Jobe. When Jobe uncovered Godongwana's plot to assassinate his father, he was sent into exile (among the Hlubi). Five years later, in 1809, he returned to the amaMthethwa bearing a new name—Dingiswayo (The Outcast)—and declared himself chief. Dingiswayo then set about the task of conquering the neighbouring peoples. However, he was a generous conqueror who managed to turn the people he vanquished into allies, thus consolidating the power of the amaMthethwa in the region. However, he was himself assassinated by another chief, Zwide. The assassination of Dingiswayo set the stage for the ascendancy of legendary military ruler, Shaka.

Coenraad de Buys does not turn his back on colonial South Africa on a mere whim or in a moment of anger and disillusionment: his rejection of colonial society is clearly mapped along a path of his choosing; it is a conscious pilgrimage away from his people and from their God. If Coenraad de Buys could once have been considered "the greatest among his people" (Millin, qtd in *Novel Histories* 124), then his journey away from his people is also the chronicle of his fall from greatness. And this is Millin's warning to her white South African contemporaries: to choose to be a *tussenskapper* or *umhlanganisi* will inevitably result in disaster.

The dismal failure, in Millin's view, of the *umhlanganisi* is illustrated when the missionary, Johannes van der Kemp, first arrives at Ngqika's Great Place in emaXhoseni. Coenraad de Buys is there to act as interpreter of the word of God and he becomes the intermediary whose task it is to convey for the first time the immensity of the Christian God to the amaXhosa.[50] At first, Ngqika is sceptical of listening to someone whose basic message, he says, seems to be that "our beliefs are bad and we must take his" (*King of the Bastards* 59). Yet the first words he hears impress both him and his councillor, Ntsikana.[51] Ngqika's initial deliberations over the passage Buys translates are central to Millin's interpretation of the process of history in the novel:

> "I have often, indeed," said Gaika [Ngqika], "wondered. Sometimes I have thought that the white people must have been made long before the black people....But what, then, of our Dali [uMdali]—our Unkulunkulu, Old Old One, Greatest Great One—who, as our fathers say, has made all and governs all? Can there be two creators?"

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[50] Van der Kemp, like Coenraad de Buys, becomes the subject of another of Millin's historical novels, *The Burning Man*. Again, for Millin, it is his "burning," his sexual desire for African women, that lies at the heart of his failure.

[51] Not only does De Buys now become instrumental in bringing the word of God to the amaXhosa, he is also instrumental in effecting the first conversion!

Coenraad answered:

> "There can be one creator destroyed, together with his work, by another creator. Or a second creator can build on the work of the first creator." (62)

For Ngqika, the Christian faith offers little more than a mental exercise. As with so many of his other passions—like his stolen bride, Thutula—he soon wearies of it and goes back to warfare. Later, when European intrusion into Xhosa society has become inevitable, he cites warfare as his obstacle to accepting European culture (176). But if Ngqika tires of the new world view, Ntsikana does not. For him, it grows into an obsession, and he says to Van der Kemp: "I cannot rest, my eyes will not slumber, because of the things you have told me;…I had one heart. Why have you given me two? I was at peace. Why have you made this war in my head?" (72) Even after Ntsikana eventually makes the choice to adhere to the Christian faith, it is the relationship between the Christian God and UMdali (Qamata) that occupies his mind; in the songs he creates he continues to struggle with finding a way around the impasse created during his first encounters with the Word of God.

Ntsikana's efforts to find a synthesis between traditional religion and Christianity offered immense possibilities for the renegotiation of nineteenth-century amaXhosa identity, as well as for the construction of a truly African modernity, but to Millin it reflected only confusion—confusion that stemmed largely from the ineffective and aberrant interpretation of the Christian faith that Coenraad de Buys mediated. If Buys's history suggests that he chooses to be *umhlanganisi*, then Millin is at pains to point out the failure and impossibility of this choice. At the end of the first encounter with the missionary, Johannes van der Kemp asks De Buys to pray with him. The two men bow their heads:

> "Why is he speaking to the ground?" Gaika murmured to Coenraad. But Coenraad did not hear him. The religious habit of his boyhood, that David Senekal, his brother-in-law, had called a mockery of God, was on Coenraad; and, in the dust, he knelt beside the missionary….
>
> There was an insect that resembled a little green twig. It had the frailest of wings and its long thin legs bent at the joints like those of a man at prayer. And this insect, the praying mantis, the Hottentots

> worshipped so that it was known as the Hottentots' God; but they themselves called it by the name of their deity—Utixo, the Giver of Pain.
>
> Gaika had often, in his kraal, heard the Hottentots click the word, and "Utixo!" he shouted, as he saw the men kneeling. "Utixo! ... Tixo! Tixo!"
>
> Dr. van der Kemp looked up at him, puzzled, dazed.
>
> Coenraad understood.
>
> "God," he said. (63)

Millin's etymology of the word *Thixo* is a figment of her own imagination. Janet Hodgson asserts that "*Thixo* is unquestionably derived from *Tsui//Goab*, the name of the great national hero of the Khoi, who is generally regarded as their supreme being" (*The God of the Xhosa* 63). Nevertheless, Millin's description represents a rare moment in South African literature where Heitsi-Eibib, the mantis-god of the Bushmen, uMdali, the All-Creator of the amaXhosa, and the Christ of the Europeans share the same physical and temporal space. What transpires is, in Millin's rendition, a sequence of misinterpretations so bizarre it becomes comical. The moment of convergence of these religions is not construed as a powerful constituting force in the creation of a new African world view, but as a mockery of God.

Ngqika may have soon tired of the diversion, but for Millin, his question about creation suggests a way for Coenraad de Buys to insinuate himself into African prehistory. When De Buys arrives at Dingiswayo's place, the amaMthethwa remark in awe to Dingiswayo: "And this Being with you is surely the spirit of our first ancestor" (104). The power-hungry De Buys of the novel relishes this possibility of becoming an Ur-ancestor, and later, when his immortality has worn off in the eyes of the amaMthethwa, he still uses the remnants of the power he held there to appropriate for himself a measure of authority among Mzilikazi's people by claiming to have taught Dingiswayo the basics of regimental warfare (289). By assuming the powers of a creator, De Buys in effect destroys the work of uMdali, the first creator, and manifests his own interpretation of a creator's powers at that fateful initial encounter between the religions of Europe and Africa. De Buys' is only able to claim power and authority by relying on the knowledge and the tools he has obtained from the white man (like guns); by using these effectively, he manages to cast Africans out of their own history and take the place of the ancestral spirits.

But if Coenraad de Buys can indeed become a creator, then by his own logic, he can also be destroyed by a subsequent creator. If he can assume the right to interpret and shape history as he sees fit and turn himself into the legitimate heir of Africa, then so, too, can the creator who comes after him. In writing the story of Coenraad de Buys, Millin herself becomes the "second creator" who "can build on the work of the first creator" by interpreting the ultimate outcome of the contribution to history that Coenraad de Buys claims for himself. For her, Coenraad de Buys is an extremely flawed creator, and it is only by ending the degenerative cycle he initiated and by choosing to follow a different path to his, that the decline can be stopped. And once more, it is only the white man who can effect the regeneration. Coenraad de Buys, by choosing to reject colonial society, becomes unfit to fulfil this role.

And yet, it is through the very act of turning his back on colonial South Africa, by abandoning his people and by making a mockery of Christianity, a philosophical mainstay of many Afrikaners, that Coenraad de Buys succeeds in appropriating for subsequent generations of whites a place in African history that allows Millin to legitimate her alternative vision of South African modernity. It is, as Michael Green notes, this "double manoeuvre of inserting contemporary racial attitudes into the past and then finding the origins of those contemporary attitudes in the past [that] is the defining move of [Millin's] historiographical procedure" (*Novel Histories* 128). When Coenraad de Buys moves north, he is seen by Dingiswayo's followers as the embodiment of the *iminyanya*; it is he who shows Dingiswayo how to put together and drill a regiment, and by doing so, he inadvertently orchestrates a mini-apocalypse by providing the young Shaka with the know-how to become a legendary conqueror. Coenraad de Buys thus becomes the catalyst for a pivotal series of events that will eventually catapult all of South African society into modernity. Millin takes this history of Africa and weaves it into a white history: where previous generations of writers, like S.J. du Toit, had attempted to superimpose a white Biblical history into the Ur-text of Africa, thus creating a space for the Afrikaner, Millin simply does not afford Africans the agency or the ability to forge a political or religious history of their own, and consequently, they have to rely on whites to initiate this history for them. By letting the amaMthethwa see De Buys as a creator, and by fostering—to some extent—this view of him, Millin endows euro-colonials with the authority to dictate and choose the interpretation of modern history in South Africa.

It is not only white South Africans who must live with the consequences of Coenraad de Buys' choices, and now choose how to interpret his original vision. The Buysvolk, too, face the challenge of choosing between the possibilities suggested by his history. And here, too, Millin assumes the liberty to nudge their decision into her direction of choice. Not all of the "Amabuna" in the novel share Coenraad de Buys' vision of belonging. Although the real Coenraad de Buys had promised his daughter in marriage to Ngqika, this union never materialised; Millin makes this unfulfilled promise of union the result of a choice—Coenraad's daughter, Regina, refuses to marry Ngqika, saying that "she would prefer to be eaten by lions rather than spend her life among Kaffirs" (48). Coenraad's son, Coenraad Willem, does not accompany him on his journey northwards. He "married a white girl and [went] to live with her people. And that was the last the Buyses saw of him, for he changed his name to his wife's and passed into the whites" (173). For Millin, becoming African in the way Coenraad de Buys chooses to is untenable, and by having the two children reject their father's vision for their future, Millin casts doubt on the validity of Coenraad de Buys' vision of what it means to belong in Africa.

Even though Millin casts doubt on Coenraad de Buys' vision of belonging, he remains an indomitable presence in the novel and in the history of South Africa. "What he might have been and achieved, under a better star!" Smuts writes in the introduction to the 1949 edition; in her explanatory notes to the novel, Millin comments: "[De Buys] might have come to be regarded as the greatest amongst his people, but for this one thing: his women were black: his families were the coloured rabble that ended as the Buys-volk, kept apart from other people in a land of their own" (qtd in Green, *Novel Histories* 124). And this to Millin is the biggest danger—that Buys could still be construed as "great" by modern South Africans. Merely casting doubt on his choice to be African on the terms he suggests is not sufficient to mask his potential for greatness. What Millin wants to show, above all, is how, through his choices, he falls from greatness and becomes "a white Kaffir: a white man living like a Kaffir among Kaffirs—which was the worst one could say of any man in the Cape" (*King of the Bastards* 138). Coenraad's decision to adopt an Africanised name for his people marks for Millin the end of the road to perdition, and he only reflects a sense of "greatness" when he uses his whiteness to produce the magic that continually mesmerizes the Africans he meets on his travels. But this magic eventually wears off, leaving him all the more "base," as Millin snidely remarks about the shift in the pronunciation of his family name as "du Buis" morphs into "Buys." The pronunciation of his name as "Base" (16) not only approximates the Afrikaans—as an English word, it reflects what, in Millin's view, Coenraad ultimately becomes. However, in the spelling of this pronunciation of the Buys family name also lies the potential for belonging in a different way: the word "Base" also represents the plural form of the Afrikaans word "Baas" (Master). The Buis family, in changing their name and becoming Afrikaners also become "Base," the Masters of the land, thus noting not only the changed relationship to Europe, but also the changing relationship to the people of the land they now call home. It is this last sense that Millin wants to nurture as a potential site for defining the terms of belonging in a modern South Africa, since "[t]he way the Buyses most forcibly declared their whiteness was by the keeping of Kaffir servants" (302).

And yet, despite what Millin presents as the misery of his life, she acknowledges that Coenraad de Buys is "great"; if not through the choices he makes, then inadvertently through the eventual consequences of these choices: his people end up as masters—decrepit masters, but nonetheless masters—in a land of their own. By having Coenraad de Buys ultimately achieve nothing more than staking his claim to a piece of the land, Millin shows how he tacitly admits defeat and accepts what he had been told many years earlier by the Commissioner-General of the short-lived Batavian Republic: "You will remain [Ngqika's] friend…. If he needs your advice, permission will be given to you to go to him. But to live in Kaffirland permanently, this can be allowed no white man" (36). As a result of his choices, Coenraad de Buys can find no peace: to the very end, he remains a wanderer and a lost soul, "paralysed, wandering in his mind as in his spirit, his body and his life…" (301). Yet Millin brings him home by salvaging the history of Coenraad de Buys, renegade and outcast, in service of the ideal of an apartheid South Africa.

The earthly paradise of apartheid South Africa reached its apogee in the early 1960s: the declaration of a Republic in 1961 stood as the ultimate rebuke to international critics; in 1962, the Transkei was granted nominal self-government as the first official Bantustan; the Sharpeville massacre and the Rivonia Trial stood as stark reminders that within the borders of this paradise, opposition would not be tolerated. The juggernaut of the apartheid state was helped along by

> the flourishing of historical fiction in the 1940s and 1950s, largely generated either by or as a response to the increasingly militant nationalism emerging at this time. (Green, *Novel Histories* 16)

Where Millin had drawn on what Smuts called the "sinister figure of Coenraad de Buys" in her manipulation of Afrikaner history (*King of the Bastards* vi), Afrikaans writers were less inclined to reflect on these dark spots in *their* whitewashed version of history, preferring instead, like F.A. Venter, to write sweeping histories about the creation of an Afrikaner utopia that either elided or subsumed large portions of the past.

The Afrikaner utopia that unfolded after 1948 was constructed around the notion of separate development. In its essence, government ideologues argued, "separate development" was

> not a policy of discrimination on the ground of race or colour, but a policy of differentiation on the ground of nationhood of different nations, granting to each self-determination within the borders of their homelands…. (qtd in *Illustrated History of South Africa* 425)

The challenge of envisioning the homelands as places of belonging for Africans entailed, inter alia, selling the notion of separate development both as historically inevitable and desirable, and as the logical culmination of African Nationalist aspirations. This necessitated the creation of yet another version of utopian history—one that would offer black Africans access to a different (yet in some respects equally revolutionary) reading of their past than that provided by writers like Herbert Dhlomo. Venter's *Swart pelgrim*

(1952; translated as *Dark Pilgrim*, 1959) went some way towards filling this gap by looking at the destructive effects of African urbanisation on traditional lifestyles,[52] and implying that Africans were better off in their respective homelands. After suffering greatly in the city, the hero of the novel, Kolisile, returns to his home in the Transkei "and with deep sorrow and gratitude he realises that he is again with those who need him, who have waited for so long" (255). While Venter illustrates the consequences of leaving the homeland, and suggests that Kolisile's future lies in returning home to his family and his people, he does not suggest how Kolisile can begin to develop a sense of belonging in this place he calls home.

The cornerstones of the policy of separate development—the historicized and individualized constructions of nationhood and the right to self-determination, and a sense of belonging in a prescribed area—provided another Afrikaans writer, J. Bruwer, with the building material for his novel, *Nongqause en die bloedrooi son* (Nongqause and the Blood-red Sun—1962).[53] An ethnologist by vocation, Bruwer brought his academic knowledge of African history and customs, as well as his theoretical support of apartheid, to his writing. The book was not well received critically, yet it was recognized as an important novel that dealt with the confrontation between "white and non-white" along the Eastern Frontier of the Cape at a time when the establishment of the first Bantu Homeland in the Transkei formed the centre of attention (Buning n.p.). Buning also suggested that Bruwer's novel marked a departure from the usual fare among historical novels of the time:

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[52] This choice of subject matter does, of course, beg comparison with Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country* and Fula's *Jôhannie giet die beeld* (Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1954; trans. Carol Lasker, *The Golden Magnet* [Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1984). See in this regard Noël Stahle, "The Road Returning: A Post-apartheid Perspective of Country and City in Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country*, Abrahams' *Mine Boy*, and Venter's *Swart pelgrim*," *Strangely Familiar*, ed. C.N. van der Merwe (Goodwood: Contentlot, 2001) 125–47.

[53] For the most recent Afrikaans treatment of the Cattle Killing, see Anna Minnaar-Vos, *Nomkosi van die Nahoon* [Nomkosi [sic] of the Nahoon] (Pretoria: HAUM, 1974).

> Waar hierdie stryd langs die Kei-, Keiskamma- en Visrivier in die geval van F.Venter tot 'n breedopgesette historiese roman gelei het soos gesien uit die oogpunt van die blanke, daar beperk Bruwer hom meer tot 'n enkel tragiese episode, nl. die rampspoedige voorspelling van Nongqause en haar oom, en word slegs sydelings verwys na die stryd tussen blankes en die dood van Hintsa. Die nadruk val dus hoofsaaklik op die voorgeskiedenis van die Xhosavolk, hul stamtwiste, tradisies en bygelowe.
>
> [Where, in the case of F. Venter, this struggle along the Kei, Keiskamma and Fish Rivers led to a sweeping historical romance as seen from the viewpoint of the white man, there Bruwer limits himself more to a single tragic episode, viz. the catastrophic prediction of Nongqause and her uncle, and only cursory reference is made to the struggle with white people and the death of Hintsa. The emphasis thus falls primarily on the prehistory of the Xhosa nation, their tribal battles, traditions and superstitions.]

The ethnologist's emphasis on the prehistory and customs of the amaXhosa, as well as the virtual exclusion of white people from the events related in the novel, reinforces the author's ideological intent. For the purpose of constructing a parallel "black" history that would justify self-determination, white people had to be excluded from the narrative as far as possible; yet in order to legitimize the Afrikaner's dominant position in the new dispensation, white people had to become an integral part of shaping that history and the future that flowed from it. Bruwer succeeds in doing this by using the same strategy that Sarah Gertrude Millin employed in *King of the Bastards*—he writes the contemporary ideology of separate development and Afrikaner supremacy onto the historical situation, and then finds within that historical situation the germ of that very policy.

Nongqause en die bloedrooi son, Bruwer notes in his preface, is set against "die wordinginsgeskiedenis van die Xhosavolk" (The history of the coming into being of the Xhosa nation) and concerns far more than a young girl's prophecies—it is about the coming into being of a nation in an earthly paradise, as well as the right to self-determination, for, the author tells us, Nongqawuse clearly did "have freedom on her mind when she led her people to such a tragic experience with her prophecies"

("Introduction").[54] The "coming into being of the amaXhosa nation" is described in a lengthy prelude to the Cattle Killing that comprises half the book and resembles a pilgrimage towards nationhood in an earthly paradise. Xhosa, the great ancestor and originator of the amaXhosa people, led his subjects to a new land, if not of milk and honey, then at least of sufficient resources: "In die vrugbare vallei is die graanlande begin en teen die hange kon die beestroppe wei" (18—In the fertile valley, crops were planted and against the slopes, the cattle could graze). However, this idyllic location also contained a destructive potential, since the formative years of the amaXhosa nation were marked by internal conflicts that lasted for generations.

The internal conflicts that ravaged the amaXhosa, as well as their desire for freedom, are framed in the language of cattle: at the start of the narrative, it is the lack of grazing for their cattle that drives the people of Xhosa south; but generations later, trouble is brewing, for in the king's Great House, the *abbavel*—the hide papoose—is empty (17). Finding a suitable home for the amaXhosa depended on finding suitable grazing for their cattle; securing the future of the Xhosa people depended on ensuring an heir who could provide stable government for future generations. "The cattle," one of King Sarhili's councillors says with reference to the prophecies of Nongqawuse, "are the nation. If the cattle die, then the nation dies" (124).

The amaXhosa, however, were not the only people in search of a place to settle along the eastern shores of Africa, and their cattle were not the only cattle in need of grazing. The Dutch farmers of the Cape Colony had come to resent the many restrictions placed on them by the colonial government in Cape Town. As time passed, they trekked steadily east and north to get away from the reaches of the colonial government in Cape Town, to find better grazing for their cattle, and also, illegally, to trade with the amaXhosa. In his introduction, Bruwer draws an explicit parallel between the fate and desires of the amaXhosa and those of the Afrikaners:

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[54] The original reads:

> Nongqause wat beslis ook vryheid vir haar volk in gedagte gehad het toe sy haar mense met boodskappe van hoop na so 'n tragiese ondervinding gelei het. ("Inleiding" n.p.)

> Soos die blanke volk van Suid-Afrika het hulle [die Xhosas] daardie dae onder vreemde oorsese bewind gestaan, en die drang na vryheid was 'n vrugbare teelaarde vir die voorspellings van Nongqause....
>
> *Bloedrooi Son* "Inleiding"

> [Like the white people of South Africa, they [the Xhosas] were under a strange foreign regime, and the desire for freedom was a fruitful breeding-ground for the prophecies of Nongqause....]
>
> *Bloedrooi Son* "Introduction"

Between the Boers who approached the eastern coast of Africa from a southerly direction and the amaXhosa who were steadily moving down from the north, there lay, according to the author, a "wilderness" (36). The events that transpired in this wilderness would change the future:

> Die voorpunte van twee groot herdersvolke beweeg stadig al nader en nader na mekaar toe, en eindelik het die trekpad vir albei teen die walle van die Visrivier ten einde geloop. Die amaXhosa en die witmense het mekaar ontmoet. Botsings sou daar wees en ook baie stryd in die aanpassingsdae van 'n nuwe tyd.
>
> [The vanguards of two great pastoral nations slowly moved closer and closer to each other, and eventually the path came to an end for both of them along the banks of the Fish River. The amaXhosa and the white people had met each other. There would be clashes and plenty of strife in the days of adjustment to a new era.]
>
> (37)

By situating the moment of their initial encounter, along with their common desire for freedom, within the context of their pastoral beginnings, Bruwer manages to present both the Afrikaner and the amaXhosa as separate "nations" (*volke*) in search of belonging and freedom from the oppression of European powers. Moreover, as "pastoral nations," their cattle maintain a pivotal place in their self-definition as "nations." Just as the suitable grazing grounds of the eastern Cape had offered the ancestors of the amaXhosa a tangible link to the land, so this very same veld now offered it to the

Afrikaners.[55] However, while the cattle may have offered the Afrikaners a point of entry into the land, they did not *ipso facto* provide them with the authority to dictate the terms of belonging in this "new era" to the people who already inhabited the territory—this required a more penetrating and authoritative presence in the history of Xhosa society.

Having secured the Afrikaners' right to existence and self-determination in the country, Bruwer takes on the task of insinuating the Afrikaners into the history of the amaXhosa. Here, once again, the way Bruwer negotiates history, and what he includes and what he either elides or subsumes into a larger narrative is crucial to the ideological function that history—and ultimately also the ancestors—performs in the novel. Some of the old people, the narrator remarks, still recall the white woman, Gquma, who washed up on the shore at the mouth of the Lwambusa River (36). Gquma is only mentioned briefly as the old people wonder whether the approaching white people had come to look for her. For Bruwer, the attempt by white colonists to retrieve the shipwrecked survivors becomes sufficient cause—from within what he presents as an African perspective—for white intrusion into emaXhoseni. He elides the rest of her history…and what a history it is.

The story of Gquma, also known as Bessie, seldom appears in print, and much of what is known about her is circumstantial: In 1782, the *Grosvenor* sank along the coast of emaXhoseni. A handful of survivors managed to reach the borders of the Cape Colony and arranged for a search party to look for other survivors. Some, but not all, were found and taken back to Cape Town.[56] Among those who remained in emaXhoseni were a mother and her young daughter. The mother soon died from her injuries, and her daughter, Bessie, who came to be known as Gquma (Roar of the Sea), was raised among the amaBomvana. As an adult, Gquma married into the house of Tshomane, leader of the amaTshomane sub-clan of the amaBomvana. Some of her descendants, in turn, married into the baTembu, which is the clan to which members of the Xhosa royal family belong.[57] Thus Bessie, the white castaway, becomes Gquma, foremother of contemporary African royalty.

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[55] Bruwer's strategy of aligning the Afrikaners' struggle for recognition as an African nation and their perceived oppression by foreign powers with similar struggles of indigenous peoples calls to mind the way in which S.J. du Toit used a similar strategy in his poem, "Hoe di Hollanders di Kaap ingeneem het."

[56] The story of the wreck of the Grosvenor, and in particular of the fate of the survivors, is taken up in Stephen Taylor's book, *The Caliban Shore: The Fate of the Grosvenor Castaways* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004). See particularly pp. 219–42 for the story of Gquma.

Many years later, European explorers found Gquma and offered her the opportunity to return to colonial society—she refused to leave her family.[58] Gquma's male co-survivors "also married local women,"

> although not of royal blood, and these unions gave rise to the abeLungu clan, subsequently centred around Elliottdale. AbeLungu means "the white people," but is derived from the name of sea foam. Indian shipwreck survivors, perhaps some from the Grosvenor, also integrated with local tribespeople, giving rise to the amaMholo clan, centred around Mazeppa Bay. The word amaMholo is thought to be a corruption of the word "Moor." (Denison).

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[57] Clive Denison writes of Gquma and the other survivors:

> They were taken in by local tribespeople and, at the age of about 17, Bessie, or Gquma as she was then known to the locals, married Tshomane, a chieftain of the amaTshomane clan of the amaBomvana. He soon died and Gquma later married his son and successor as chief, Sango (or Xwebiza). Descendants of this union include members of the royal houses of amaMpondo, baThembu and amaXhosa tribes, while some married back into European families. The Thembu connection is interesting as one of Gquma's descendants was Dalindyebo, of the Tembu royal house, the house to which Nelson Mandela is affiliated. According to a genealogical table presented by Kirby, Gquma was Dalindyebo's great-great-grandmother. ("The Sea Princess," *The Natal Witness* 30 June 2003. http://www.witness.co.za/content/2003_06/16418.htm)

[58] In her poem "Bessie," *Jerusalemgangers* (Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau, 1986) 11–12, Antjie Krog revisits the importance of Gquma's refusal to see herself as anything but umXhosa as a model for establishing a modern African identity. See Appendix 2 for a translation of the poem.

Given this broader history of the *Grosvenor* and other shipwrecks along the coast, it seems strange that Bruwer would include Gquma's story in a narrative designed to exemplify the roots of separate development. Gquma and her male co-survivors, like Coenraad de Buys, speak of a history of contact that illustrates integration rather than separation. At the end of her life, Gquma chooses to stay with the amaXhosa. Her choice contradicts all expectation and certainly breaks the norm: she is, in all respects, *umhlanganisi*. However, just as Millin did with Coenraad de Buys, Bruwer does not hold Gquma's choice as an example to other whites; rather, he uses her to insinuate for the Afrikaner a place in African history. For Bruwer, her heroism does not lie in the fact that she chooses to be African, but that through her, he is able to legitimize both the Afrikaner's presence in Africa and apartheid ideology.

In *Nongqause en die bloedrooi son*, Bruwer does not deny that integration occurred, for he notes that in the early days of contact between the European settlers and the amaXhosa, "the herds of the Xhosa and the white Abelungu walk[ed] among each other along the banks of the Fish River" (37—Die kuddes van die Xhosa en die wit Abelungu loop langs die Visrivier se walle deurmekaar). However, Gquma's story is different. The genealogy of Gquma's descendants wove people of European descent into the fabric of amaXhosa society, yet the association with the royal lineage also offered an ancient precedent that could be used in support of self-determination: the quarrel between Gcaleka and Rharhabe, the sons of Phalo, split the amaXhosa into two separate nations. Although Gquma's history established a common genealogical bond between the amaXhosa and the European settlers, the precedent of Gcaleka and Rharhabe meant that this bond could be broken and that the descendants could, once more, become separate "nations." This could only happen, however, if sufficient authority could be found to legitimate such a drastic course of action.

Nongqawuse's prophecies followed almost half a century of turmoil that included intermittent warfare against the settlers, as well as the struggle for supremacy between the two Gcaleka leaders, Ndlambe and Ngqika. The physical turmoil was reflected in the equally tumultuous re-evaluation of traditional beliefs—represented most starkly in the opposing views of Ntsikana (who was councillor to Ngqika), and his adversary among the amaNdlambe, Nxele. Ntsikana promoted a synthesis of the old and the new, and in his hymn, "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," he called God the one "Who amalgamates flocks rejecting each other" (line13. qtd in Hodgson, "Genius" 30); Nxele (also known as Makanda or Makanna) promoted militant opposition and the rejection of all things European.

Ntsikana's suggestion of synthesis and amalgamation of flocks was clearly anathema to proponents of separate development like Bruwer, and the process of writing the notion of self-determination onto the history of the Eastern Cape required finding some way of justifying the policy from within the world view of the amaXhosa themselves. Bruwer finds this justification in the words of Nxele (Makanda), who is called upon by Ndlambe to find out what is causing the unhappiness among the ancestors. After spending the day deliberating with the ancestors, Makanda announces to the amaNdlambe:

> "Umdali is doof en die voorouers is kwaad. Die mense van Ngqika het hulle ore gesluit. Die seun van Mlawu het die geeste versteur, want na die land van sy vaders het hy die witmense genooi."
>
> ["Umdali is deaf and the ancestors are angry. The people of Ngqika have blocked their ears. The son of Mlawu [Ngqika] has disturbed the spirits, for he has invited the white people into the land of his fathers."]
>
> *Bloedrooi son* 53

The ultimate authority in the traditional system of belief, the *iminyanya*, are angered by the continued presence of the white people in emaXhoseni. They want this walking together of the herds to come to an end in the new dispensation that awaits them after the fulfilment of Nongqawuse's prophecies (37). The amaXhosa and the "white Abelungu" would have to become separate nations once more, and it is upon the authority of the ancestors that Bruwer bases his reading of Nongqawuse's prophecies.

Throughout the novel, Nongqawuse repeatedly insists that the ancestors have to be obeyed. King Sarhili echoes this central premise of belief while deliberating her prophecies with his councillors. Sarhili's mind is finally swayed when Kalipa, to whom

Sarhili had given his favourite ox, is found dead in his kraal the day after the death of the ox. Sarhili regards this as the definitive omen:

> "As die geeste gesels, moet hulle kinders luister. As die voorouers vra, moet ons mense gee, of die voorouers vat."
>
> ["If the spirits talk, their children must listen. If the ancestors ask, our people must give, or the ancestors will take."]
>
> (101)

If Nongqawuse—whose communion with the ancestors has been proven through a series of substantiating events such as these—says that the ancestors ask for cattle, then they must be given cattle. Yet the ancestors do not just ask for the destruction of the cattle; they also promise to give again in abundance. Once the ancestors have been propitiated, the amaXhosa will receive their freedom (102). However, Sarhili also remarks that if the ancestors are not obeyed, they will take what they require for propitiation. Sarhili's words become the crucial final link in the logic that underlies Bruwer's argument and ultimately provides Afrikaners with the moral authority to dictate the political future of the region.

Through their cattle, both the Afrikaners and the amaXhosa obtain the right to inhabit the land. Through Gquma, the white people are linked to the Xhosa royal ancestry, and they therefore become *iminyanya* who affect the lives of their descendants in the time of Nongqawuse. We hear from Sarhili that these ancestors have to be obeyed, and that "Die witmense vra beeste, beeste, beeste…. Aan wie moet die volk hulle beestroppe gee? Aan die wittes wat eis of die geeste wat vra?" (103—The whites ask for cattle, cattle, cattle….To whom should the people give their cattle? To the whites who demand, or the spirits who ask?). If, through Gquma, the whites are in fact ancestors, then the answer to Sarhili's question is evident: give the cattle to the whites, who are, after all, your ancestors. In the end, Sarhili decides not to give cattle to the whites, thus incurring the wrath of these self-assumed new ancestors, who take what they want. After the Great Disappointment, when the ancestors failed to appear, the colonial troops under Major Gawler and Commandant Currie scoured the territory and captured any remaining cattle (Peires, *The Dead will Arise* 285).

Thus having exacted their sacrifice, the self-appointed ancestors make the amaXhosa pay penance for their impropriety before giving them the freedom—and one assumes, also the abundance—that Nongqawuse had predicted would come once the ancestors were propitiated:

> 'n Honderd jaar later sou die amaXhosa eindelik die vryheid ontvang om hulself te bestuur, maar op 'n heel ander manier. Die twee groot herdersvolke van weleer, die volk van Xhosa en die wit Abelungu wat tweehonderd jaar gelede op die Visrivier se walle ontmoet het, het eindelike begin om mekaar te verstaan.

Bloedrooi son "Inleiding"

> [One hundred years later, the amaXhosa would at last receive the freedom to manage their own affairs, but in a completely different way. The two great pastoral[59] nations of long ago, the people of Xhosa and the white Abelungu who met on the banks of the Fish River two hundred years ago, have finally started to understand each other.]

Bloedrooi Son "Introduction"

The understanding Bruwer speaks of is the recognition that the policy of self-determination and apartheid is not only historically legitimate, but also the "fulfilment" of a prophecy. Nongqawuse, whom Dhlomo had held up as a symbol of African resistance to European oppression, becomes the harbinger of a new, quite different dispensation.[60]

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[59] The Afrikaans "herdersvolke" is generally translated as "pastoral people," although in a secondary meaning, it could also mean "shepherd nations" with all the connotation of guardianship this suggests.

[60] My appreciation to Erika Terblanche of the Nasionale Afrikaanse Letterkunde- en Narvorsingsmuseum in Bloemfontein for alerting me at the last minute to a little-known poem by I.D. du Plessis, "Nongkwase" (*Die Huisgenoot*, 21 May 1926: 27). This poem offers a significantly different Afrikaans reading of Nongqawuse's story than that offered by Bruwer and I hope to incorporate it into my discussion of Nongqawuse at a later point.

If Afrikaans writers were appropriating the core icons of African history as part of their attempts to enforce an apartheid state and to reinforce and justify the racism of the present moment, then African writers in the vernacular worked equally hard at countering that perception. James James Ranisi Jolobe was a young poet during the 1930s. He initially drew attention when his collection, *Umyezo* (Orchard, or Fruit Garden),[61] won the Esther May Bedford Prize in 1936. Among the poems was the epic poem "uThutula" about a young Xhosa girl whose legendary beauty had brought about a war between Ndlambe and Ngqika. Thutula was married to Ndlambe, but Ngqika, her lover, abducted her, thus precipitating the war that culminated in Ngqika's defeat at the Battle of Amalinde in 1819.[62] Jolobe interweaves the story of Thutula with that of Ntsikana, the prophet who had warned Ngqika against fighting at Amalinde and who was also one of the first Christian converts. At the end of the poem, it is Ntsikana's vision, his "Truth" that endures ("Thutula" *Umyezo* 110; *Poems* 31).[63] During the 1930s, Jolobe's work was overshadowed by that of Dhlomo and Vilakazi. Like Vilakazi in isiZulu, Jolobe had experimented with the use of rhyme in isiXhosa, but by 1959, when Jolobe published his second collection of poems, *Ilitha* (1959),[64] he had reverted to using more traditional forms in his poetry.

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[61] The title also calls to mind the noun *iyeza*, medicine. Thus *Umyezo*, a garden or orchard could also refer to one who dispenses medicine. Some of the poems in *Umyezo* were later published in translation as *Poems of an African* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1946).

[62] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Thutula's importance in relation to Ntsikana and the early years of African literature.

[63] Chris Mann calls on Thutula's role as a catalyst of events to reassess the role of the shades in modern society. In *The Sand Labyrinth* (1990, ms 200.96.1, National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown), Mann emphasises the importance of the shades in constructing a new sense of belonging in South Africa.

[64] *Ilitha*: "A ray of light that enters through a narrow opening; fig. A stitching pain or a painful nerve" ("iliTa," Kropf, *A Kaffir-English Dictionary*). The metaphoric implications of the title speak clearly: this volume of poetry is meant as a ray of light, but it also speaks of an intense pain, or of a sensitive nerve that has been touched.

The political context within which Jolobe produced his second volume was radically different from that of the 1930s, and the muted resistance that both he and Dhlomo had offered in their early work was no longer appropriate in the wake of the Defiance Campaign and the Treason Trial. The time had come to revisit Nongqawuse and turn her revolutionary potential, which Dhlomo could only hint at, into a vivid reality.

"Ingqawule" is an ambitious work that draws on Western literary models in addition to the literary and oral traditions of the amaXhosa by incorporating elements of the izibongo into a predominantly western epic structure. In the short opening section, Jolobe creates an atmosphere reminiscent of the "aromatic hours" Dhlomo had insisted were necessary to emphasise the magico-religious aspect of African drama ("Drama and the African" 5). Night is closing in and in the twilight, King Sarhili prepares to hear testimony about Nongqawuse's vision and to discuss it with his councillors. Sarhili's eventual decision to execute the instructions from the ancestors is not made impetuously: it is carefully considered in the light of several pieces of corroborating evidence, and it is, ultimately, a perfectly rational decision when considered from within the traditional world view of the amaXhosa.

Jolobe legitimates Nongqawuse's prophecy and her position as a diviner by describing in detail the nature of her *thwasa* experience, by means of which she is identified as an *igqira*, and more significantly, one favoured by the ancestors:

> Kozingela umendo zikho neziphambuka
> Ezigquka umkhondo osingisa kwigqarhi.
> Kwaba njalo kwintombi kaMhlakaz'
> uNongqawuse.
> Ngaminazan' ithile wabuya echibini
> Umzimb' uthuthumela okomkhanzi wonxweme.
> Wajuba walutywantsi wanqula okwehobe.
> Umganwa wamathongo, inceku yamanyange,
> Yangathi yalamile, ibonene nechanti.[65]

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[65] The translation of the phrase "ibonene nechanti" as "seemed to have seen the

Cont next page....

(*Ilitha* 44)

[The seeker of the way to the healer
Is beset by detours down garden paths.
So it happened to the daughter of Mhlakaza, Nongqawuse.
One day she returned from the deep pool
With her body quaking like one traumatized.
She fainted and cooed like a pigeon.
Initiate of the spirits, ancestors' favourite,
Seemed to have seen the numinous.]

(qtd in Kuse, "Form and Themes" 288)

When she regains consciousness after her trance experience, Nongqawuse gives an account of the descent into the world of the ancestors. Unlike the other authors who consciously avoided Nongqawuse's vision and focused instead on the aftermath of her prophecy, Jolobe recounts her vision in detail, constantly imbuing it with contemporary, twentieth-century, significance:

Kuyo loo ntywenkakazi wajonga isidala
Umtwana wamaphupha wanga ubona nkomo
Zivelisa iimpondo, zikhonya kamnanndana,
Zawuphinda umkhondo zaya kwizwe lendyebo
Elingenazinzima naxhala lampangeko.
Wabona ithwala-ndwe indwalutho nozwane,
Ngondileko nenzolo nebunzi ukuqonda.
Kwalandela ithole lesilo ingonyama,
Linenquma letshawe, ukutsola kweliso
Intlahla yabegazi, lambeth' imfaneleko.
Wawafihla amehlo ngezandl' uNongqawuse,
Angaphandlwa yimitha yelang' elatshonayo.
Kwathethw' atsolileyo ambalw' engqikelelo.

---

numinous" captures the deep sense of spirituality that accompanies her vision, whereas a more literal translation "she had seen *ichanti*" or, "she had seen things that should not be seen" draws the reader's attention to *ichanti*, the multi-coloured water snake of Xhosa folklore. The brilliance of the snake's colouring, together with the "riot of colour" Nongqawuse encounters on her initial descent into the world of the ancestors, calls to mind Joseph's dream in the desert, where he wears a brilliant dream coat. The ease with which this commingling of Christian and traditional symbols occurs lies central to the author's development of a modern interpretation of the events of the cattle killing.

Ichithi loboniwe kwilizwe lamathongo,
Aqumbile luchitho lombuso ngabezizwe.
Ayeza enamandla kwanobungangamela.
Ukuhlangul' isizwe kwisihelegukazi
Umgqaliselo ngulo; kufuneka urhumo
Ngento yonk' ehambayo nesivuno somhlaba;
Kubhokoxwe ludladla, kudinjazwe sisele.

(45)

[Into that deep the child did gaze
A long while, and a vision came:
She saw the horns of lowing cattle in a trance.
Then the cattle receded to the land of plenty
Where there is no hardship or eviction.
She saw a distinguished-looking hero,
Every inch the object of praise:
Dignity, deportment, and intelligent forehead.
Then followed the "Lion," the cub of a beast,
Resplendent with royalty, the flashing eyes, the very embodiment of nobility.
Nongqawuse had to shield her eyes
Lest this glory which was no more
Should strike her blind.
She heard him speak in sharp considered words:
The chaos had been noted by the spirits.
They were upset over the dying of the polity at the hand of the foreigners.
They were coming in force
To vindicate the nation
And to redeem it from the debacle.
This requirement was imperative—a holocaust
Of all the stock and harvest
To the last reserve.]

(289)

In her vision, the ancestors from "the land of plenty" outline their most important concerns: they have noted the chaos; they are upset at the way the settlers have governed; and they are coming to vindicate the people. The concerns of the ancestors were as valid in Nongqawuse's time as they were for Jolobe's contemporaries, who inhabited a society that was experiencing great turmoil and chaos. Government policies that included the introduction of formal apartheid, evictions and forced removals, as well as pass laws, created great resentment towards the government; Africans resisted these changes, inter alia, through bus boycotts and the Defiance Campaign. The social fabric of urban African society was torn asunder as political leaders either went underground or were imprisoned during the Treason Trial.

The ancestors, Jolobe intimates, are watching and will vindicate the people, for their wrath is not directed at the amaXhosa, but at "Aqumbile luchitho lombuso ngabezizwe / Ayeza enamandla kwanobungangamela" (45—the waste of power and the dying of the polity / at the hands of the foreigners [289]). In return for the sacrifice of the cattle and the crops, the ancestors promise regeneration:

> Kuthenjiswa umdolo wemfuyo elulibo,
> Izimb' elikutyeba, indiphane yombona,
> Nemibimbi yolulwe kwiimazi ezindala,
> Zizuze ubuntombi okwamagudazana.
> Imimango neemfunda ukususel' eMbashe
> Kuse kwelaseNxuba yolawulwa nguXhosa,
> Azulumbek' elwandle umfo welasemzini.
>
> (46)

> [The promise was regeneration
> Of flocks and seedlings unimaginable,
> Sorghum of extraordinary richness, maize aplenty,
> Wrinkled visages to be made supple,
> Old women to regain youth's beauty.
> The vales and ridges from the Bashe River
> To the Fish River would be ruled, once more, by the Xhosa,
> And the foreigner would be cast into the sea!]
>
> (Kuse 289)

In *u-Nongqause*, Mary Waters had presented Nongqawuse's vision as a premonition of the imminent demise of traditional ways among the amaXhosa, and the notion of regeneration was interpreted as a complete overhaul of the societal framework in a Christian mould; in "Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa," Vilakazi had focused on the promise of physical regeneration. Dhlomo, on the other hand, hinted at a more political reading of her dream. Jolobe does not deny the validity of the readings offered by either Waters or Vilakazi, since he notes the promise of physical regeneration and comments that Nongqawuse "Themba labakholwayo / Gqabi lomthi wobomi, / Vuko lwabafileyo / Walunakana" (46—had an inkling of the hope of believers / A leaf of the tree of life /

and the resurrection of the dead [289]). However, his primary task is to extend Dhlomo's reading into a contemporary setting: the ultimate reward for making the sacrifice, he concludes, would be winning back the control of the land that, historically, had belonged to the amaXhosa and had been taken away during the "regime of the outsiders" (287).

Part of the reason for Sarhili's thorough investigation into the origin of the prophecy is that he is aware of the very real possibility that this could be a false prophecy. Jolobe takes time to establish the validity of the prophecy within the cultural framework of Sarhili's time, but also re-iterates the importance and relevance of the vision for his contemporary readers:

> Ovayo wazikisa intombi ithongile.
> Yinkolo yakwaXhosa namamhla kusathongwa
> De ngathi yinyaniso kobalisa iphupha
> Elimalunga nabo sebeye kusithela.
> Luway' amatshivela. Akho ndidini zonke,
> Anyalasa kwiindawo eziphakamileyo.
> Angab' afumana na sigwana sokukhanda
> Intsongelo yotshaba olugqobhe kwaNgqika,
> Kuhlutshezwe inkosi ngamathemba osizo
> Oluvel' eNyangweni kwelo labafileyo,
> Ngokukhwela kwiqegu lokuthonga komntwana?
>
> (46)
>
> [The vision of the girl was gravely pondered—
> Xhosa people take dreams seriously to this day;
> It is as if truth is mediated through dreams
> From those who have gone beyond already.
> But watch out! Mischief-makers are in all classes, everywhere.
> They strut in prominent places.
> Could they have come upon some ruse
> To subvert the intention of an enemy to destabilize Ngqika's domain
> And mislead the chief with hopes of aid
> From those beyond, in the land of the dead,
> By taking advantage of a girl's
> Susceptibility to visions?]
>
> (290)

The warning about "mischief-makers" is repeated three times in the section, providing a sense of coherence to the passage that is reminiscent of the way in which an *imbongi* maintains coherence during the performance of a praise-poem.[66] This warning is not an idle one for, like Dhlomo, Jolobe is concerned with the interpretation—particularly a contemporary interpretation—of Nongqawuse's dream. "The essence of a dream is found beyond a veil" (287), the narrator states at the beginning and then continues to interrogate Nongqawuse's dream and to tear away the veil systematically and reveal the dream proper. Was "[t]he promotion of this new thing / … /…her original conceptualisation?" (289), the narrator asks, and then continues to note that "truth is mediated through dreams" (290).

At the gathering on the day the ancestors were meant to arrive, the royal *imbongi*, Chizama, delivers his oration: it is both a celebration and a warning, for Chizama sees not only the possibility of "national prosperity," but also "a noble people reduced to the state of beggars, / pitiful, destitute and disoriented" (294). As Cumpsty notes, social chaos produces a sense of disorientation and it is the desire for a semblance of stability and order that drives communities to search out alternate world views or to re-assess their existing ones ("Model" 65–67). The upheavals of the nineteenth century, just like those of apartheid South Africa, left the amaXhosa confused and disoriented, searching for alternate models to explain their world. Jolobe captures the doubt and dissension of the historical and the contemporary moments he interrogates. He does not belabour the suffering of the amaXhosa, as both Waters and Vilakazi do, but moves rapidly to the arrival of the refugees in the land occupied by the colonists. Nongqawuse is among these refugees, and where Jolobe's poem enters untrodden terrain is in the discussion of Nongqawuse's life subsequent to the Cattle Killing.

Having dealt with Nongqawuse's vision and the importance of interpreting it correctly, he tells the continuing story of Nongqawuse in a short, chilling interlude that drives home the contemporary relevance of the poem:

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[66] Jolobe consciously calls on the oral tradition in several ways: at the start of the poem, he introduces Sarhili with a set of stock phrases used by *iimbongi*. To emphasise this link to the oral tradition, he follows the tradition of *ukubonga* by making certain stock phrases his own.

Abasemagunyeni kwelokuphambbukela,
Ngokumoyikisela hleza abe sisulu
Sentshutshiso nogxwalo kwabanempindezelo,
Okanye ukuthonga kube nemvuselelo
Yena benoNonkosi baba selugcinweni
Kwisiqithi sokhetho lwababhadi-luxolo.
Esithukuthezini kwilizwe lasemzini
Bacamncga kaliqela ngesihelegukazi,
Inzalo yokuthonga kumazwe okuzalwa.

(54)

[Authorities in the land of refuge
Feared that she and Nonkosi
Might be exposed to vengeance, persecution and harassment
Or some other consequence of the dreaming—
So they were taken into protective custody,
To an island where disturbers of the peace are kept separate,
Isolated in an alien land.]

(296)

Among the leaders who were imprisoned during the Treason Trial of 1956–58 was Rohihlahla Nelson Mandela. In a few years, this modern "disturber of the peace," like his historical counterpart, Nongqawuse, would be given a life sentence on Robben Island.[67]

The historical Nongqawuse returned from her imprisonment and settled in the district of Alexandria, where she converted to Christianity and eventually died of old age. Rather than stopping the narrative at her death, Jolobe reveals the enduring relevance of her life and her vision by describing her journey "home" to the land of the ancestors. In a section that initially calls to mind Dante's journey through Purgatory and later through Paradise, Nongqawuse is accompanied through the underworld by a guide who explains to her the images she encounters along the way. The journey Jolobe's Nongqawuse makes through the world of the ancestors stands in stark contrast to the vision of the underworld that Nongqawuse has in Mary Waters' play. In *u-Nongqause*, the prophetess ~~had~~ a vision of the ancestors enduring immense suffering as a result of their lack of faith. Beyond their place of suffering lay a land of unrivalled beauty, accessible only to those who believed in Christ's resurrection (5). By contrast, Jolobe's Nongqawuse finds those ancestors who continued to adhere to their traditions living in a land of milk and honey, beyond which she sees another land. She learns from "an august person" among the ancestors that those who failed to heed tradition were condemned to this place, "a land of starvation and death far surpassing *Ingqawule*" (298). Where Waters presents paradise as a vision, a metaphysical state towards which the faithful strive, Jolobe presents paradise as a tangible reality. By taking his readers on a journey through the land of the ancestors rather than merely offering a tantalizing vision of it (as Waters does), he makes their presence in this world real. He emphasises that the *iminyanya* are not just an abstraction, but a fundamental reality of this world.

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[67] Mandela's name "Rohihlahla" means "pulling the branch off the tree" or more colloquially, "troublemaker."

Jolobe's ancestors are caring and rejoice in seeing Nongqawuse. After welcoming Nongqawuse in their midst, they set about allaying the fears and self-doubt that had haunted her all her life. The messenger's first words refer to her vision: Nongqawuse's vision was correct, he says, but the interpretation was wrong. It was wrong to fear the white people, because they brought with them some new and beneficial ways of living. This is what was meant by the cattle in her dream, and these would become a reality once the Xhosa accepted this new knowledge. While there was much good in these new customs, there was also plenty that needed preferably to remain hidden (58–59; trans.: 299–300).

The call for a new interpretation of Nongqawuse's vision is repeated several times during the passage, and each time it emphasises the importance of tradition as well as the possibility of integrating both the new and the old. In the closing passage, the Lord appears and Nongqawuse rejoices as she discovers that "Ukwasi uQamata asiwumbi nguThixo / Umniki-bomi butsha apho kwaKhaykhulu, / Kwilizwe lemimoya, iKhaya loMsinsindisi" (61—Qamata / is none other than God—/ The bestower of a new life at the Great Home / In the land of the spirits, the home of the Saviour" [301]). Xhosa and Christian spirituality merge and become indistinguishable in the new order, much as

Ntsikana had envisioned it would, to form the foundation of an integrated nation: *isizwe yehlanganisi*.

Conclusion

> The *iminyanya* are of all other forces that which preserves the unity of a tribe, and preserves it from disintegration.
>
> John Henderson Soga, *AmaXosa Customs* 151

> The next time Twin saw Qukezwa it was at the crossroads. She was standing in front of a pile of stones, oblivious of him. She added another stone to the pile, and carefully placed green herbs on top of it.
>
> Zakes Mda, *The Heart of Redness* 23

> Suddenly the path widened and there before them was a hole—not a game trap—but a depression in the ground, overlaid with moss. Near it stood a small cairn of stones. Walter turned to Crispin and Benedict.
>
> "What is it?"
>
> "An *isivivane* cairn and a confessional," said Crispin softly. He pointed to the hollow in the earth. "This is where people come to tell their secrets to the shades."
>
> Marguerite Poland, *Shades* 139

> Uku lesesha kuku teta nenncwadi: si ti imbali zezinto, zi bekwe enncwadini; a ze a ti umtu aku kangela, a bone ukuba zi ko, a zi funde, a z'azi; a ti gomnye umhla a be sele z'azi, a` zi tyele abanye abantu. … Kanjako into e sukuba z'enzwa siti apa, so ti ukuba zi baliwe enncwadi, z'aziwe gabantu bayaku ba ko manxa sisesi file kade tina.[1]
>
> UmFundi (Student) to UmQeni (Lazy), *Umshumayeli*, January 1839

It is no accident that a pile of epigraphs precedes this chapter: they comprise an *isivivane*. Sizwe Satyo notes that "what the forefathers said is believed to be preserved in the proverbs, other wise sayings and some traditional stories" (*Traditional Concepts* 32).

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[1] Reading is like talking to books: they tell stories (*imbali*) about things, which are put in books; when someone looks at them, he sees they're there, he studies and knows; he reads and knows what they're about, and then he can tell other people. … And further, the things that we do, if they're put into books, will be known by succeeding generations after we're gone. (Trans: Opland, "Transitions" 141)

It is no accident that the Xhosa writer, G.B. Sinxo, used epigraphs at the start of every chapter of his novel, *Umfundisi waseMthuqwasi* (The Reverend of Mthuqwasi): the epigraphs functioned as words of wisdom from a range of ancestors—African and European—that were meant to guide the reader through the words on the page. The epigraphs at the start of this chapter also form part of an *isivivane*—one beside which South Africans can gather to share their secrets with their literary and real ancestors, and where the living can gather knowledge from the *iminyanya*. Each stone in this *isivivane* has been chosen with care to represent what I consider to be the major thematic concerns that I have encountered or raised during my journey through this dissertation: the *iminyanya*; books as spaces where the *iminyanya* interact across cultures; and books, stories and reading as ways of preserving and sharing knowledge. Each stone I have placed on the *isivivane* represents an opportunity to reach a fuller understanding of how and on what terms South Africans belong.

In 1862, in the first issue of *Indaba*, Tiyo Soga made what was at the time a startling claim: that writing could become a way of resurrecting the ancestors. More than a century later, the ramifications of Soga's claim are still not understood fully. If we conceive of writing as a space in which to commune with the ancestors—an *ikhundla* (homestead) or *isivivane*—then it follows that we as readers can also learn from the ancestral wisdoms contained in these same books. Resurrecting the ancestors in books also suggests the possibility that the intellectual activity that takes place within the pages of a book emerges, or could emerge, from within the traditional knowledge and belief systems that inform the lives of the writers that produced those works. By following this path of reasoning, I arrive at a resurrection of a different kind: the intellectual resurgence that has—perhaps infelicitously—been termed the "African Renaissance." The debate surrounding the nature of this "renaissance" continues, and as a contribution to the ongoing debate, I have sought to find a way to make theory fit practice. Throughout my dissertation, I have tried to bear in mind Mongane Serote's challenge to intellectuals to recognize the differences that exist in our society, but at the same time to focus on the commonalities (*From Anti-Apartheid to African Renaissance* 158). Drawing on indigenous knowledge systems rather than on conventional western critical theory, I have tried to construct a reading strategy that will allow us to "read together" rather than to "read apart" and to formulate a discourse that will allow us to speak inclusively about South African literature in all its languages and forms. I have consciously tried not to compartmentalize the literatures under discussion; I have looked for points of confluence rather than moments of difference, but I have done so without ignoring the difference. This has been little more than the first steps in what will be an ongoing effort to read South African literature in several languages together. It is a strategy that I am confident will eventually lead to new insights and conclusions regarding South African literature.

In keeping with the objective of developing a locally-based reading strategy, I have taken as a "shared problematic" the concept of the *iminyanya* (Brown, "National Belonging" 758). In the course of my discussions on how the *iminyanya* have informed literature written in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, I have begun to develop a discourse that is based on local terminology and that is drawn primarily from indigenous knowledge systems. The chosen problematic and the localized vocabulary have enabled me to raise questions of belonging in new and potentially exciting ways. My reading strategy has allowed me to focus on points of confluence, on similarities and a shared sense of belonging, rather than on difference. However, this does not mean that I have hidden or ignored ideological differences: in my discussion of J. Bruwer's *Nongqause en die bloedrooi son*, for instance, I show how an Afrikaner writer has manipulated the historical events leading up to and surrounding Nongqawuse and the Cattle Killing by using what Michael Green call "historical interventionism" (*Novel Histories* 116). As a consequence of this interventionist strategy, Bruwer has managed to turn the story of Nongqawuse into a moment that vindicates apartheid ideology. Even so, Bruwer relies on a knowledge of, and interest in, the workings of the *iminyanya* to fashion for the Afrikaner a sense of belonging that is linked closely to the African continent. This reliance on the *iminyanya* to construct a sense of belonging is a commonality he shares with other writers—whether they write in Afrikaans, English, or isiXhosa.

By reading our literary past as a shared problematic centred on the relationship with the *iminyanya*, it has been possible to see how Ntsikana's incorporation of a new world view, Thomas Pringle's vacillating consciousness, and Thomas Bain's need to express himself in the hybrid spoken language of his society all point to a desire to reassess the way we belong in a changing world, so that we can stop being intellectual vagabonds. From Schreiner's recognition of something unfathomable in African history and her indefinable morphing giant, we can see how subsequent generations of writers have struggled with the same issues and concerns: the ungainly Waldo in *The Story of an African Farm* looks out from Africa, and seeing nothing that draws his interest, turns back and travels back into Africa. Waldo's efforts to belong in Africa and to find himself speaks as much of the shifting foundations of belonging as does H.M. Ndawo's attempts in *uHambo lukaGqobhoka* to preserve the traditional by means of ethnographic descriptions. William Wellington Gqoba, like C.P. Hoogenhout, questions the relationship between education and progress. In a subsequent generation, Herbert Dhlomo, like S.J. du Toit before him, attempts to construct a sense of belonging in the liminal space between Europe and Africa. And like Dhlomo, William Plomer and Roy Campbell, instead of seeing Europe and Africa as separate entities, begin to explore the immense possibility that can emerge from finding a synthesis between these cultural traditions.

The easy way in which the discussions around belonging in the 1920s and 1930s moved between languages and different forms of media, and the way in which these discussions drew on and complemented each other, highlights not only the differences between these figures, but also the way in which they traversed the same territory in similar ways. However, while intellectuals advocated a shift towards synthesis, writers often consciously or subconsciously resisted such a paradigm shift on a more practical level. Buchan's desperate assault on traditional religious practices in *Prester John* points not only to his attempt to preserve a crumbling empire, but also to his resistance to the changing face of the local. Sarah Gertrude Millin's tortured and guilt-ridden Coenraad de Buys in *King of the Bastards* reinforces the danger of succumbing to the lure of Africa. And yet, for S.E.K. Mqhayi, the exodus to the north that Coenraad de Buys pre-empted becomes an exercise in solidarity that Africans could emulate in their own struggle for recognition of their rights as human beings ("Isifundo semfuduko yambhulu") . While Mqhayi's own allegorical *Ityala lamawele* wags a cautionary finger at the behaviour of the settlers, it also suggests the possibility of embracing the change—as does his utopian novel, *u-Don Jadu*.

Joubert Reitz's hesitant and qualified interaction with the ancestral bones in *Die dolos gooier*; Arthur Fula's search for ways in which to preserve traditional practices in the city in *Met erbarming, o Here*; and A.C. Jordan's concern with letting reverence of the ancestors fade from the rural memory in *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* all point to the importance of the *iminyanya* in the respective constructions of identity and belonging in an increasingly urbanized environment. Although Mary Waters, Herbert Dhlomo, J. Bruwer, J.J.R. Jolobe, and Benedict Vilakazi all took divergent positions on Nongqawuse's significance, not one of them denied that her prophecies contributed immensely to the way South Africans saw themselves then—just as Chris Mann, Zakes Mda and Brett Bailey recognize that Nongqawuse still continues to inform our understanding of ourselves to this day.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the ancestors lie central to the way in which South African writers have located themselves and their sense of belonging. I have argued, further, that the *iminyanya* have the ability to transcend cultural barriers and that by making the *iminyanya* an integral part of our literary make-up, as many writers have done, literature can become a space where South Africans can get to know each other and begin to move beyond the divisiveness of the past. I stated in the introduction that my project was about bringing the intellectual shades home. To that end, I have theorized books as sites of intersection, of cultural confluence—as *izivivane*, stone cairns erected at crossroads—where we communicate with the *iminyanya*. I have looked at how our literature reflects a sense of wrestling with the ancestors and how ancestors from different cultural groups have begun to communicate with each other at these sites.

In keeping with my premise that what is needed is a theory that grows from the continent rather than one that has been superimposed from the outside, I have attempted to develop a critical language that is formed from within indigenous knowledge systems. The two critical terms I introduce in the dissertation—*umhlanganisi* and *tussenskap*—have both grown from local debates and I now wish to turn briefly to a discussion of these terms and their usefulness as the basis for a localized critical framework.

It is perhaps no coincidence that G.A. Jooste first coined his term, *tussenskap*, in 1990. This was a momentous year: the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela was followed by Namibian independence and the start of the political negotiations that resulted in the elections of 1994. For South Africans, the last decade of the twentieth century was a climatic end to decades of turmoil—and academics were struggling to find suitable language in which to describe the effect of these changes on individuals. *Tussenskap* captured the spirit of the moment: Jooste introduced the concept by stating that it signified a search for "geestelike tuistes te midde van ontwykende vastigheid" [spiritual places of belonging amidst elusive certainty] (140). For Jooste, the successful *tussenskapper* was the person who had acknowledged the need for change and who had indicated a willingness to change her or his lifestyle. In several ways, Jooste's *tussenskapper* reflected the general state of mind in South Africa at the time—people constantly had to mediate between divergent loyalties and adapt to life in a new, post-apartheid era. Although Jooste applied his theory only to Afrikaans literature, I have shown that the condition of *tussenskap* was not limited only to Afrikaners or to Afrikaans writing; it epitomized South Africa, a country in transition.

The *tussenskapper* is therefore a product of the late twentieth century and although Jooste has used the term mostly in reference to contemporary literature, I have argued that the term can also be used to describe characters in several older literary works, including Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, where Waldo finds himself caught between two cultures; however, when in a moment of defiance Waldo decides to turn his back on the sea and return to Africa, he chooses a different lifestyle. Even so, he remains caught between two worlds—the quintessential *tussenskapper*.

The general state of uncertainty and confusion in South African society is what had prompted J.S. Cumpsty in the mid-1980s to develop a model for socio-cultural change. Cumpsty was interested in discovering why so many people on the Cape peninsula were showing an interest in traditional religious systems. He argued that the high degree of social disturbance necessitated a search for religious security in other cultural practices. I have relied in part on Cumpsty's analysis to show how, at various times since 1800, different cultural groups in South Africa have experienced a similar sense of displacement and that at such times they have looked beyond the confines of their own cultural practices for a sense of belonging; or how, like Thomas Pringle, they were still secure enough in their own cultural practice and did not have to search elsewhere for a sense of belonging.

While the condition of being a *tussenskapper* reflects people in a state of transition, the term does not take into account characters or people who have successfully made the transition and who no longer find themselves in a state of *tussenskap*, but have found a renewed sense of security and belonging in a new or renewed cultural practice. The most obvious instance of such displacement and the consequent search for, and discovery of, alternative places of belonging is Ntsikana. In "Ulo Thixo omkhulu," Ntsikana negotiates the worlds of ancestral religious practice and Christianity and finds for himself and his followers a space where they can be at peace in the midst of the surrounding turmoil.

In order to describe the way in which Ntsikana negotiates the space between cultures, I have used various forms of a word that he himself uses in "Ulo Thixo omkhulu": *ukuhlangana*. I have argued that Ntsikana himself is *umhlanganisi* and that becoming *umhlanganisi* provided him with a renewed sense of peacefulness and belonging. In finding peace and a sense of belonging, Ntsikana becomes more than a *tussenskapper*, for the *tussenskapper* is one who searches for that elusive sense of peace. In a sense, the *umhlanganisi* has arrived at a new homestead, whereas the *tussenskapper* remains a traveller.

The *umhlanganisi* consciously strives to reconcile opposing world views, whereas the *tussenskapper* is not necessarily interested in bringing about reconciliation. Jooste notes that *tussenskap* (the condition of being a *tussenskapper*) is often accompanied by a rejection of traditional values. By contrast, although the *umhlanganisi* reaches out to other cultural practices and incorporates many of them into a new set of cultural norms, he or she remains acutely aware of tradition. The successful *umhlanganisi*, therefore, becomes the type of intellectual Mongane Serote suggests is needed to bring about the African renaissance—a person who recognizes difference while actively searching for points of confluence.

While I have used the past tense to describe the development of a new critical vocabulary, I wish to underscore that my current efforts represent only the beginning: it is only with the practical readings behind us that we can begin to theorize South African literature beyond the apartness that has characterized our critical discourse. This is an ongoing project; one that I have only tentatively begun to explore. The task ahead involves, among other things, situating ourselves within the framework of wider postcolonial debates on our terms and in relation to what we have ourselves produced and theorized.

At present, postcolonialism reads our literatures, our cultures and our histories from a European vantage point. Although Laura Chrisman and others have attempted to shift this vantage point, it remains the dominant conceptual mould, reinforcing the European world view. Anne McClintock makes the point forcefully:

> The term confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper; colonialism is the determining marker of history. Other cultures share only a chronological, prepositional relation to a Euro-centred epoch that is over (post-) or not yet begun (pre-). In other words, the world's multitudinous cultures are marked, not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time. (86)

It is easy to fall to the temptation of highlighting, yet again, the pitfalls of the term "postcolonialism" and in so doing forget about other, more pressing and practical concerns in developing a workable critical practice. My dissertation has attempted on several levels to venture beyond the rubric of postcolonialism and to go beyond a mere rehashing of these polemics. My concern from the start has been *not* to situate my work in relation to the histories of Europe, but to foreground local histories; not to situate my critical terminology within a broader postcolonial framework but instead to work at finding practical ways in which to transcend some of the more pressing limitations of such a framework. With my initial exploration of literature written in three South African languages behind me, I can begin to explore South African literature in a wider context and to find practical ways in which to work beyond the constraints of history and convention.

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Appendix 1

Strandloopers? Quite the lowest form of man!
We ought to be ashamed to think how we began!

Professor Pimp, who lectures on them, tells
They left no culture—only oyster shells,

He says that they went naked on their rambles,
And where they squatted always left a shambles.

Isn't it shocking to repeat these facts?
And so suggestive of disgusting acts!

Professor Pimp says they're our ancestors!
Of course no sense of decency occurs.

To scientists or highbrows as a rule,
Professor Pimp's a Bolshevik, a fool!
To think a man like that's allowed to teach a school!

Strandloopers? They were just wild brutes!
They had no stays or stockings, spectacles or boots!
Nothing to smoke, not even cheap cheroots!

No bioscopes or beer or guns or daily press!
No ships or trams or aeroplanes, much less
Euphonious radio, sweet symbol of progress!

From cold sea-slime to port and a cigar,
From shell-fish to shell-factories we follow a bright star.

Professor Pimp's a highbrow—I'd like to see him shot.
Had they no culture? We have quite a lot.

(*Voorslag* 1.1: 53)

Appendix 2

Bessie
Antjie Krog

the feather blanket is edged
with golden trim of sand
blue smocked with foam
spread softly to all sides
lusikisiki lusikisiki
murmur reeds far from the seams
wood from wrecks snip out the blue
washed onto the beach lies a child
i am Bessie i am Bessie
she cries against the rock

they carry her to the Abelungu kraal
becomes Gquma: tongue of the lowing sea
white calves are marked for her
also flotsam hairbrushes are marked for her
thick sun-golden hair has she
hair as smooth as reeds
all hairs hers say the Abelungu the honey-hair
of Gquma

when the final wooden strut gives
porcelain from rotted chests spread
slowly over the sandy ocean floor
perfect cups capsize a vase bubbles
loose from its lid
blue and white saucers wobble in the soft sand
an empty tea party—soundless
the voices of the drowned ride out on the streams
Bessie Bessie she cries against the rock

at the pillar of Sao Thiago he leaves her
as corpse in the dunes of Angra Pequena he forgets her
the dark woman of Diaz

on all fours they crawl
tins tied around their necks
in the moonlight lies Ida Tal
stretched out diamond blue

ride whites with stretched out hands
Bessie we come to take you to the Cape
woman of Tshomane refuses to return
is since haplographed from history